



(U) CTS Horizon Report 06 July 2018

(U//FOUO) Note: The Counterterrorism Section ("CTS") Horizon Report is an open source U//FOUO daily intelligence publication tailored specifically to the needs of its principal reader. The brief is based on preliminary reporting, some of which has been derived from media outlets. Reporting of this nature is often inaccurate and subject to change as the situation continues to unfold. The principal will be made aware of any known threats to Chicago, on a need to know and right to know basis.

(U//FOUO) Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

(U//FOUO) CTS has no information to indicate that a specific, credible threat exists to Chicago, at this time, but based on the current threat environment CPIC/CTS will continue to monitor emerging intelligence.

(U//FOUO) Current Threat Environment

(U//FOUO) Foreign terrorist organizations—such as al-Qa’ida, the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham, and their affiliates remain intent on attacking Western targets and continue to call on individuals to conduct independent attacks in the United States using a variety of weapons and tactics including arson, vehicle ramming, edged weapons, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and the use of small arms. Recent plots and attacks demonstrate the continued and growing interest by foreign terrorist organizations and other violent extremists in targeting mass gathering events. To date, these attacks have focused primarily on soft targets, such as tourist destinations, sporting events, music venues, shopping districts, and mass-transportation systems.

(U//FOUO) US-based HVEs—possibly encouraged by violent extremist messaging encouraging further attacks, media attention, and perceived success of recent incidents—may also be inspired to act during the holidays and opportunities such as a convention to access large crowds. HVEs and small groups of individuals are of particular concern due to their ability to remain undetected until operational, their willingness to attack civilians and soft targets, and their ability to inflict significant casualties with weapons that do not require specialized knowledge, access, or training.

It should be noted that elements of this document may be subject to 28 CFR Part 23. The Chicago Police Department Crime Prevention and Information Center (CPIC) recognizes that Americans have constitutionally protected rights. The CPIC privacy policy was established to safeguard these rights. Any further disclosure or dissemination of this document or the information contained herein is strictly prohibited without the approval of the CPIC. This document and the information contained herein shall not be released to the media or the general public. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in civil, criminal or disciplinary action.

(U//FOUO) Local Suspicious Activity Reporting (SARs)

(U//FOUO) NSTR

(U) CT Watch Overnight News

CONUS

1. More than 10 percent of Americans charged with supporting ISIS served in military [Washington Times]

- Slightly more than 10 percent of Americans who are arrested on charges of providing or trying to provide support to the Islamic State have served in the U.S. armed forces, a study says.
- Fordham University's Center on National Security examined cases from March 2014, when the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria became a serious global threat, through August 2017.
- The researchers identified 144 investigations of Americans trying to help the Islamic State. Of those cases, 135 resulted in charges with 77 convictions.
- Since the report was published, the total number of U.S.-based Islamic State prosecutions has risen to 162 Of those charged, 17 had served in the U.S. military
- Five of the 17 had served short times in the military, and three of them did not advance beyond basic training. Eleven veterans tried to join [IS] after leaving the armed forces.
- Only one-active duty soldier, Ikaika Kang, has been captured. He was serving in Hawaii and was arrested in a sting.
- One of the most recent cases involved a Marine who was discharged for not disclosing health concerns. The Justice Department announced June 4 that Everitt Aaron Jameson pleaded guilty to trying to provide support to the Islamic State.

2. Dzhokhar Tsarnaev lawyers seek to unseal interview with brother's associate [Boston Herald]

- Appellate lawyers for Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev are fighting to get their hands on sealed interviews with Ibragim Todashev, a Chechen national who was fatally shot by an FBI agent after allegedly confessing that he and Tsarnaev's late brother Tamerlan were behind an unsolved triple murder in Waltham.
- The attorneys, whose argument for sparing Tsarnaev's life is due next month before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in Boston, filed a motion with the court late Tuesday asking that the reasons for their request be sealed, as well.
- Todashev knew Tamerlan Tsarnaev, 26, from a mixed-martial arts gym in Boston where both had trained.
- Todashev was fatally shot in Orlando, Fla., on May 22, 2013, one month after the brothers' terrorist attack on Copley Square, while being interviewed by the FBI.

3. Feds' Bid for Drone Secrecy OK'd by Second Circuit [Courthouse News]

- The U.S. government can redact a fact about its predator drone program believed to have been publicly acknowledged since 2013, the Second Circuit ruled unanimously on Thursday.

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- The three-judge panel would not reveal what the United States wanted to keep under wraps, but attorneys from the [ACLU] believes it relates to a targeted-killing program in Pakistan, which former Secretary of State John Kerry even acknowledged while in office.

4. French IS-linked Group Depicts Fighter Overlooking Midtown Manhattan to Warn of Future Attacks [SITE Intelligence Group]

- A French Islamic State (IS)-linked media group depicted a gun-toting fighter overlooking Midtown Manhattan to warn of future attacks.
- An-Nur Media Center published the poster on Telegram on July 5, 2018, showing the fighter on a mountain looking down on the city, with a French translation of two Qur'anic verses: "Verily, they see it (the torment) afar off. * But We see it (quite) near" [Al-Ma'arij, 6-7].

OCONUS

1. Germany searches for IS-member behind Anis Amri's Berlin truck attack [Deutsche Welle – DEU/GER]

- German prosecutors have identified 32-year-old Meher D., a Tunisian-born "Islamic State" (IS) member, as the key accomplice to the Berlin truck attacker Anis Amri.
- The suspect apparently communicated with Amri online and provided instruction before and after the December 2016 attack.
- The Federal Court of Justice issued an international arrest warrant for Meher D., according to Friday reports
- Authorities reportedly believe the IS-member is located in Libya.
- Tunisian national Anis Amri, who was 23 at the time, stole a truck and drove it into a Christmas market in Berlin, killing 12 and injuring 48 more people in 2016. He then fled the scene and was shot by Italian police near Milan four days later.

2. Iran regime diplomat arrested in Germany to be sent to Belgium [Baghdad Post – IRQ]

- The Iranian diplomat who was arrested in the German state of Bavaria will be transferred to Belgium, [the] Deutsche Welle Persian Service reported.
- The prosecutor's office in Germany's Bamberg state has not released further information.
- See also Asharq al-Awsat – UK: Belgium: Arrested Couple is 'Sleeper Cell' Dispatched by Tehran to Spy in Europe

3. Military veterans to Kremlin: Come clean about Syria mission [Reuters]

- Russian military veterans urged the government on Thursday to acknowledge it sends private military contractors to fight in Syria, in a bid to secure financial and medical benefits for the fighters and their families.
- The statement breaks years of public silence about a secret operation involving thousands of Russian civilians fighting in Syria on the side of President Bashar al-Assad whom Moscow has been helping militarily since September 2015.
- Based on accounts of people who knew killed fighters and a military medic, Reuters earlier reported that over a hundred contractors had died in combat since the start of the operation in Syria. The Kremlin denies such an operation exists.

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4. Turkey arrests wanted PKK terrorist deported by Norway [Yenisafak – TUR – embedded photo]

- Police arrested PKK terror group member Gülizar Taşdemir, 42, at Istanbul's Atatürk Airport on Thursday.
- Taşdemir's arrest came following her deportation from Norway when her asylum request was rejected.
- During her body search, police seized two cellphones, two SIM cards, three flash memory cards as well as digital material, documents related to the terror group and photographs shot alongside Öcalan.
- Recruited by the PKK in 1991, Taşdemir received armed training at the Mahmur camp, Iraq, and was with Öcalan, the jailed head of the PKK terrorist organization, for many years.

5. Turkey Arrests 33 ISIS Suspects in Anti-Terror Operations Across Istanbul [Al Bawaba – UAE]

- A total of 33 Daesh-linked suspects, including 28 foreign nationals, have been arrested in anti-terror operations across Istanbul, a security source said on Thursday.
- Turkish security forces carried out simultaneous raids at 11 addresses in 5 districts of Istanbul, said the source who asked not to be named due to restrictions on speaking to the media.
- The suspects were allegedly plotting terror attacks, it added.

6. Saudi police arrest Qatar pilgrim on "terror charge" ahead of Haj [Al Araby – UK]

- Saudi authorities have arrested a Qatari man as he performed pilgrimage to Islam's holiest site amid a year-old blockade against Doha led by its Gulf neighbours.
- Qatari newspaper al-Sharq reported on Thursday that Saudi security services detained the man at the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan on terror charges.
- "Information indicates that the Qatari man was on his way to perform the lesser Umrah pilgrimage when he was arrested by Saudi authorities under mysterious circumstances," the report said. "He now stands accused of terrorism," [it] added.
- Saudi news website al-Watan reported on Wednesday that a Qatari man had been arrested during Ramadan and put on a state terror list. It added that he was the second Qatari to have been arrested for "terrorism".

7. Yemen's Houthis May Have Drones With Bombs, and They're Using Them Against The Saudi Coalition [Al Bawaba – UAE – embedded photo and video]

- Yemen's Houthi rebels have been using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's) or drones for some time. But this week marks the first occasion that they appeared to use drones to launch bombing attacks against Saudi and Emirati coalition troops.
- Moreover, video footage of the attack suggests that the Houthi's have a new type of UAV in their arsenal, or at least one that has not been documented before.
- Al Bawaba consulted Tim Michetti, the Head of Regional Operations in the Middle East for Conflict Armament Research [who] . . . believes that the video is showing an airstrike from a fixed-wing UAV.
- The UAVs we've documented to date have either contained optics for surveillance and reconnaissance, or explosives. However, we've yet to inspect a UAV in Yemen that has contained both.
- That being said, I've recently heard reports and viewed photos of a new variant UAV not previously seen in Yemen.

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- The reported UAV shares a resemblance with the Qasef-1 UAV currently being operated by Houthi forces. One of the UAVs shown in the video is a Qasef-1, and the other much smaller one is a Skywalker used for surveillance.

8. Hezbollah allegedly training Nigerian Shiites to expand influence in West Africa [Middle East Institute – USA]

- While Hezbollah's military expansion across the Middle East, particularly since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011, has drawn a great deal of attention, the Lebanese organization's efforts to increase its presence and influence in Africa has largely been overlooked.
- Nigeria is a case in point. Sources close to Hezbollah say the organization provides ideological and military training to Nigerian Shiites inside Lebanon.
- The Shiite Nigerians initially receive a religious training before a military one that is provided in two camps in the Lebanese Bekaa" . . .
- While it may seem as something of an oddity, the proselytization of Nigerians dates back to more than three decades ago.
- Nigeria is home to the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, a jihadist organization founded in the early 1980s with a strong support among the country's five million Shiite Muslims.
- Now, Hezbollah and Iran appear to be upping the ante. The increased proselytization and militancy effort by Hezbollah toward Nigerian nationals seem to be driven by local and international dynamics.

9. South African mosque attacker had no links to extremism: police [Reuters]

- The person who killed two worshippers at a South African mosque last month was a psychiatric patient with no link to extremism, the elite police investigating unit Hawks said on Thursday.
- Two worshippers were stabbed to death and two others injured during the early morning incident at a mosque in Malmesbury, . . . (65 km) north of Cape Town. The attacker was shot dead by police . . .
- "There is no connection with extremism or terrorist related activity in this case. It is an isolated case of a person who has serious psychological issues," said [police] . . .
- The Malmesbury incident came a month after three men armed with guns and knives slit the throats of three worshippers at a mosque north of the east coast port city of Durban, killing one person and seriously injuring two others.
- This updates [investigation] a prior ONN article

10. [Pakistani] CTD tracks down four 'TTP militants' [Dawn – Pakistan]

- The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) claimed on Thursday to have averted a major terrorism plan allegedly aimed at targeting politicians and personnel of an intelligence agency by arresting four men belonging to the proscribed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).
- The arrests [were] . . . conducted in a south Punjab area, says the spokesman.
- Coincidentally, a CTD team arrested a suspected terrorist in Daska city as well.
- The CTD spokesman said the south Punjab operation continued for several hours and it led to the arrest of Abdullah, Naimat Rahim, Salman Rahim and Mansoor Rahim who were waiting for a suicide bomber to carry out an attack . . .
- The alleged terrorists . . . had completed tracking of the high-profile politicians and personnel of an agency.

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11. 3 Bomb Explosions in Pasuruan, East Java [IDN] [Indonesia Investments]

- . . . East Java Police . . . informed local media that around 11:30 am (local time) [July 5] he first explosion was heard coming from the house . . . After the second explosion a man was seen exiting the house . . . carrying a backpack.
- This man is being searched [sought] by the police. According to local media this man, . . . Anwar (and who originates from Aceh), has been renting the house for two years.
- While fleeing the scene (by motorcycle) he threatened a local resident . . . not to reveal his identity. The witness [said Anwar] . . . was injured (with quite some blood on his face and clothes).
- [Police] . . . said that - when fleeing - the suspect also threw two explosives toward . . . officers . . . believed to be low explosives.
- It could very well be that the first bomb went off prematurely and was meant to be used for a terrorist attack.
- This would be very similar to the bomb explosion that occurred in an apartment unit in Sidoarjo (East Java) in early May 2018.

12. Several ex-members of Japan doomsday cult including leader executed: media [MSN via Reuters]

- The former leader of Aum and several other members of the Japanese doomsday cult that carried out a deadly sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995 were executed on Friday, public broadcaster NHK reported.
- Chizuo Matsumoto, who went by the name Shoko Asahara, was the first of 13 scheduled to be hanged for the attacks, which killed 13 dead and injured more than 6,000, NHK said. Japanese media broke into regular programming to report the news.
- The Aum Shinri Kyo, or Aum Supreme Truth cult, which mixed Buddhist and Hindu meditation with apocalyptic teachings, staged a series of crimes including simultaneous sarin gas attacks on Tokyo subway trains during rush hour in March 1995.
- Sarin, a nerve gas, was originally developed by the Nazis.

13. IS-linked Group Uses Photo of Baghdadi's Dead Son to Symbolize His Words on Pursuing Death Against Enemy [SITE Intelligence Group]

- An Islamic State (IS)-linked group used the photo of Hudhayfah al-Badri, the dead son of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, to symbolize his father's words on pursuing death against the enemy.
- Muharir al-Ansar posted the image on Telegram on July 4, 2018, using the photo of Hudhayfah that the IS' Homs Province released on July 3, and placing next to it a translated excerpt from the November 2016 speech by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, "This is What Allah and His Messenger Promised Us".

14. ISIS Claims Attack 'Killed Four American Soldiers [in SYR],' But U.S. Coalition Denies [Newsweek]

- The Islamic State militant group (ISIS) claimed responsibility on Wednesday for an attack on a joint U.S. and coalition forces convoy in Syria—a claim U.S. officials said is inaccurate.
- Local reports out of the region Thursday indicated that ISIS fighters initiated a complex attack on a convoy made up of American soldiers and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.
- One of the tactical vehicles in the convoy struck an improvised explosive device implanted near a cemetery in the town of Al-Namliyah, located in the northern part of Syria's eastern Deir Ezzor province.

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- ISIS claimed via its official Amaq News Agency to have “detonated 18 explosive devices, causing the deaths of 4 American soldiers and the wounding of others.”
- However, these deaths were denied by the U.S.-led coalition . . .

• See also SITE: [IS Claims Killing 4 American Soldiers in Chain of Explosions in Deir al-Zour \[SYR\]](#) and SITE: [IS' Barakah Province Claims Another Instance of Bombing U.S. Forces](#)

15. [Romania hands jail sentences to two Hungarians on terrorism charges](#) [Romania Business Review – ROM]

- Romania's High Court sentenced two Hungarian citizens to 5 years in jail each for attempting to detonate an improvised explosive device during the December 1 celebrations that took place at Targu Secuiesc in 2015.
- Szocs Zoltan and Beke Istvan Attila have been accused of terrorism acts.
- Both men were members of the extremist group Youth Movement 64 (HVIM) from Transylvania. Zoltan was the leader of the movement.

16. [15 militants killed, others arrested in security operation, southwest of Kirkuk \[IRQ\]](#) [Iraqi News]

- Around 30 people were killed and arrested during a security operation, carried out in southwest of Kirkuk, the Federal Police announced on Thursday.
- The operation, according to the statement, “left 15 militants killed, 63 villages purged, seven booby-trapped vehicles destroyed and 15 suspects arrested.”
- Earlier today, the pro-government al-Hashd al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization Forces) killed two Islamic State members as they were trying to sneak into Hawija.
- On Wednesday, Federal Police killed an Islamic State leader called Shehab Ahmed al-Sallab at the outskirts of Hawija.

17. [ICC reveals second arrest warrant for Benghazi \[LBY\] commander](#) [News24 – RSA via AFP]

- The International Criminal Court revealed on Thursday it has issued a second arrest warrant for a Libyan military commander accused of shooting dead 10 jihadist prisoners after a Benghazi mosque attack.
- The new warrant for Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf Al-Werfalli, issued on Wednesday, cites "his alleged responsibility for murder as a war crime" in the Libyan conflict . . .
- Despite an earlier warrant issued in August, Werfalli, a commander of the Benghazi-based Al-Saiqa Brigade loyal to Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar, has remained at large.
- Now ICC judges have found "reasonable grounds to believe" that Werfalli "allegedly shot dead 10 persons in front of the Bi'at al-Radwan Mosque in Benghazi" on January 24.

18. [Three terrorists surrender to military authorities in Tamanrasset \[Algeria\]](#) [APS – ALG - snippet view]

- Three terrorists on Thursday surrendered to military authorities in the province of Tamanrasset, announced the [Algerian] National Defence Ministry in a communiqué.

19. [25 Daesh militants eliminated in Nangarhar \[AFG\] offensives](#) [Pajhwok Afghan News]

- At least 25 Daesh -- or so-called Islamic State (IS) -- rebels have been killed during air-and-ground operations in eastern Nangarhar province, an official said on Thursday.
- Hazrat Hussain Mashriqiwal, spokesman for the 202nd Shamsad Police Zone, told Pajhwok Afghan News the security forces conducted the offensives in Haska Mena and Achin districts.

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- He said about 25 IS members, including a judge named Aslam Farooq, were killed during the operations in the past 24 hours.

20. Far-right extremist attacks in Germany dropped sharply in 2017: media [Reuters]

- Far-right extremist attacks in Germany dropped sharply in 2017, with the number of violent attacks against migrant housing centers down by 70 percent, the Funke newspaper chain reported Friday, citing the German BfV domestic intelligence agency.
- The agency told the newspaper one reason for the drop could be higher conviction rates and long sentences for those accused of such crimes. The number of migrants entering Germany also dropped significantly in 2017.
- However, the far-right extremist scene continued to pose a significant threat, the agency told the newspaper, citing a recent increase in networking and cooperation among such groups across Europe.

21. Thousands flee key Yemeni port city as Hodeida offensive continues [Washington Post]

- Thousands of civilians continue to flee the strategic port city of Hodeida while those remaining are gripped by perpetual fear of airstrikes, residents and aid workers said Thursday, as diplomats press for a cease-fire and peace talks.
- The offensive for Hodeida, launched last month, is widely seen as a critical juncture in Yemen's three-year-old civil war
- Diplomats are also counting on the backing of Iran, which supports the Houthis, in sealing an agreement that will eventually allow the United Nations to control Hodeida's port.
- Previously . . . there had been a deal with both sides to allow the United Nations to control the Hodeida port, but it fell apart because the Houthis insisted that they keep control of the city of Hodeida.
- A senior Houthi leader blamed the coalition on Thursday for the lack of an agreement, saying that coalition forces have continued their push to take the city.

22. IS-linked Tech Group Publishes WhatsApp Security Manual [SITE Intelligence Group]

- An Islamic State (IS)-linked tech group published a manual providing security tips for using WhatsApp.
- The English-language PDF was shared on July 4, 2018 on the Telegram account of the "Afaaq [Horizon] Electronic Foundation."
- The manual provided three primary "steps" for best privacy practices, the first two pertaining to downloading the app from official sources such as the Google Play store and using a virtual phone number to register an account. The third step, "Adjust the privacy settings," recommended:
- Not to sync phone contacts; Not to allow access to the device's internal memory
- Enabling Two-step Verification; Showing security notifications, which alert the user if encryption keys have changed; Preventing chat backup sync

(U//FOUO) This document is tracked by HSEC Codes: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.8, 8.9, and 8.10.

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Crime Prevention and Information Center



Counterterrorism Section

Daily Awareness and Homeland Security Brief

06 July 2018

TLO Meeting

3rd Quarterly Meeting Public Safety HQ
3510 S. Michigan on July 25, 2018 0800-1230hrs

Special Events

Cincinnati Reds vs. Cubs
Wrigley Field @ 1320hrs

Radiohead Concert
United Center @ 1930hrs

Chicago Summer Dance
Grant Park @ 1800-2130hrs

International Festival of Life
Union Park @ 1200-2200hrs

Festival Guadalupeño
06 July-08 July 2018 @ 3200 E. 91st Street

10th Annual Millennium Art Festival
06 July – 08 July 2018 @ 155 N. Michigan Ave.

West Fest
06 July – 08 July 2018 @ 1800-2000 W. Chicago Ave.

Chicago Michelada Festival
07 July – 08 July 2018 @ 1000- 1300 W Cermak

Live on Lincoln Park
07 July – 08 July 2018 @ 1731 – 1845 N. Stockton

Edison Park Salutes Those In Uniform
07 July 2018
6600 – 6733 N. Olmsted & 6600 N. Oliphant

Irish American Heritage Festival
06 July - 08 July 2018 @ 4626 N Knox Ave

Public Gatherings

009th District

Friday, 06 July 2018, 1700-1830 Hours, Rally & March, 4600 S. Wood Street. The group will assemble regarding their campaign "Increase the Peace."

006th District

Saturday, 07 July 2018, 1000 Hours, March for Peace, 79th Street Red Line Station - 7900 S. State Street. The group will assemble regarding their campaign, "Shut Down the Dan Ryan to Combat Gun Violence."

001st District

Saturday, 07 July 2018, 1100 - 1400 Hours, March, Great Lawn, Millennium Park. The group will assemble regarding their campaign, "March for Our Rights Chicago."

001st District

Saturday, 07 July 2018, 1400 - 1700 Hours, Demonstration, Congress Parkway & Michigan Avenue. The group will assemble regarding their national solidarity campaign, "STOP Terrorizing Immigrants and Refugees!"

012th District

Sunday, 08 July 2018, 1300-1500 Hours, Action, 1952 W. 21st Street. The group will assemble regarding their campaign, "Affordable Housing for All - Don't Move. Fight Back!"

001st District

Monday, 09 July 2018, 1700 Hours, Rally, Federal Plaza - 230 S. Dearborn Street. The group will assemble regarding their campaign "Rally in Response to Trump's Supreme Court Nominee."

001st District

Wednesday, 11 July 2018, 1300-1600 Hours, Rally, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights - 228 S. Wabash Avenue. The group will assemble in regard to their campaign "No Borders, No Cages. Dismantle the Immigrant Rights Lobby [IRL]."

012th District

Saturday, 14 July 2018, 1200-1500 Hours, March, Plaza Tenochtitlan - 1800 S. Blue Island Avenue. The group will assemble regarding their campaign, "Joyful resistance: March for our Hoods 2018."

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It should be noted that some of this information describes First Amendment protected activities. The CPIC recognizes that Americans have constitutionally protected rights to assemble, speak, and petition the government. The CPIC safeguards these rights and only reports on First Amendment protected activities for operational planning in the interest of assuring the safety and security of the public including demonstrators and public safety personnel. The CPIC will continue to communicate these events with other law enforcement partners in an effort to facilitate the Chicago Police Department's mission of protecting the lives, property and rights of all people, to maintain order, and enforce the law impartially. For comments or questions contact the CPIC at 312-745-5669 or CPIC @ChicagoPolice.org.

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Crime Prevention and Information Center



Counterterrorism Section

Daily Awareness and Homeland Security Brief

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Media Reporting

(U) British Authorities Say Victims Were Not Directly Targeted; Risk To Public Remains Low

British officials are investigating a second case of poisoning with the nerve agent 'Novichok' in Wiltshire. Officials say they suspect the victims were not directly targeted but sickened as a consequence of a previous attack. Police announced late Wednesday that a couple in their 40s were poisoned by the same lethal toxin that almost killed two other people in March. "The working assumption would be that these are victims of either the consequence of the previous attack, or something else, but not that they were directly targeted," a security official said. A British medical officer said the risk to the general public remains low. Source: Twitter [The Associated Press], Reuters

(U) More than Ten Percent Of Americans Charged With Supporting ISIS, Served In Armed Forces

Slightly more than 10 percent of Americans who are arrested on charges of providing or trying to provide support to the Islamic State have served in the U.S. armed forces, a study says. Fordham University's Center on National Security examined cases from March 2014, when the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria became a serious global threat, through August 2017. The researchers identified 144 investigations of Americans trying to help the Islamic State. Of those cases, 135 resulted in charges with 77 convictions. Since the report was published, the total number of U.S.-based Islamic State prosecutions has risen to 162. Of those charged, 17 had served in the U.S. military and 5 of the 17 had served short times in the military, and three of them did not advance beyond basic training. Source: Washington Times

(U) IS-linked Group Uses Photo of Baghdadi's Dead Son to Symbolize His Words on Pursuing Death Against Enemy

An Islamic State (IS)-linked group used the photo of Hudhayfah al-Badri, the dead son of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, to symbolize his father's words on pursuing death against the enemy. Muharir al-Ansar posted the image on Telegram on July 4, 2018, using the photo of Hudhayfah that the IS' Homs Province released on July 3, and placing next to it a translated excerpt from the November 2016 speech by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, "This is What Allah and His Messenger Promised Us." Source: SITE Intelligence Group

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An Islamic State (IS)-linked tech group published a manual providing security tips for using WhatsApp. The English-language PDF was shared on July 4, 2018 on the Telegram account of the "Afaaq Horizon Electronic Foundation." The manual provided three primary "steps" for best privacy practices, the first two pertaining to downloading the app from official sources such as the Google Play store and using a virtual phone number to register an account. The third step states to adjust the privacy settings so that the phone sync contacts are not allowed to access the device's internal memory. Source: SITE Intelligence Group

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It should be noted that some of this information describes First Amendment protected activities. The CPIC recognizes that Americans have constitutionally protected rights to assemble, speak, and petition the government. The CPIC safeguards these rights and only reports on First Amendment protected activities for operational planning in the interest of assuring the safety and security of the public including demonstrators and public safety personnel. The CPIC will continue to communicate these events with other law enforcement partners in an effort to facilitate the Chicago Police Department's mission of protecting the lives, property and rights of all people, to maintain order, and enforce the law impartially. For comments or questions contact the CPIC at 312-745-5669 or CPIC @ChicagoPolice.org.

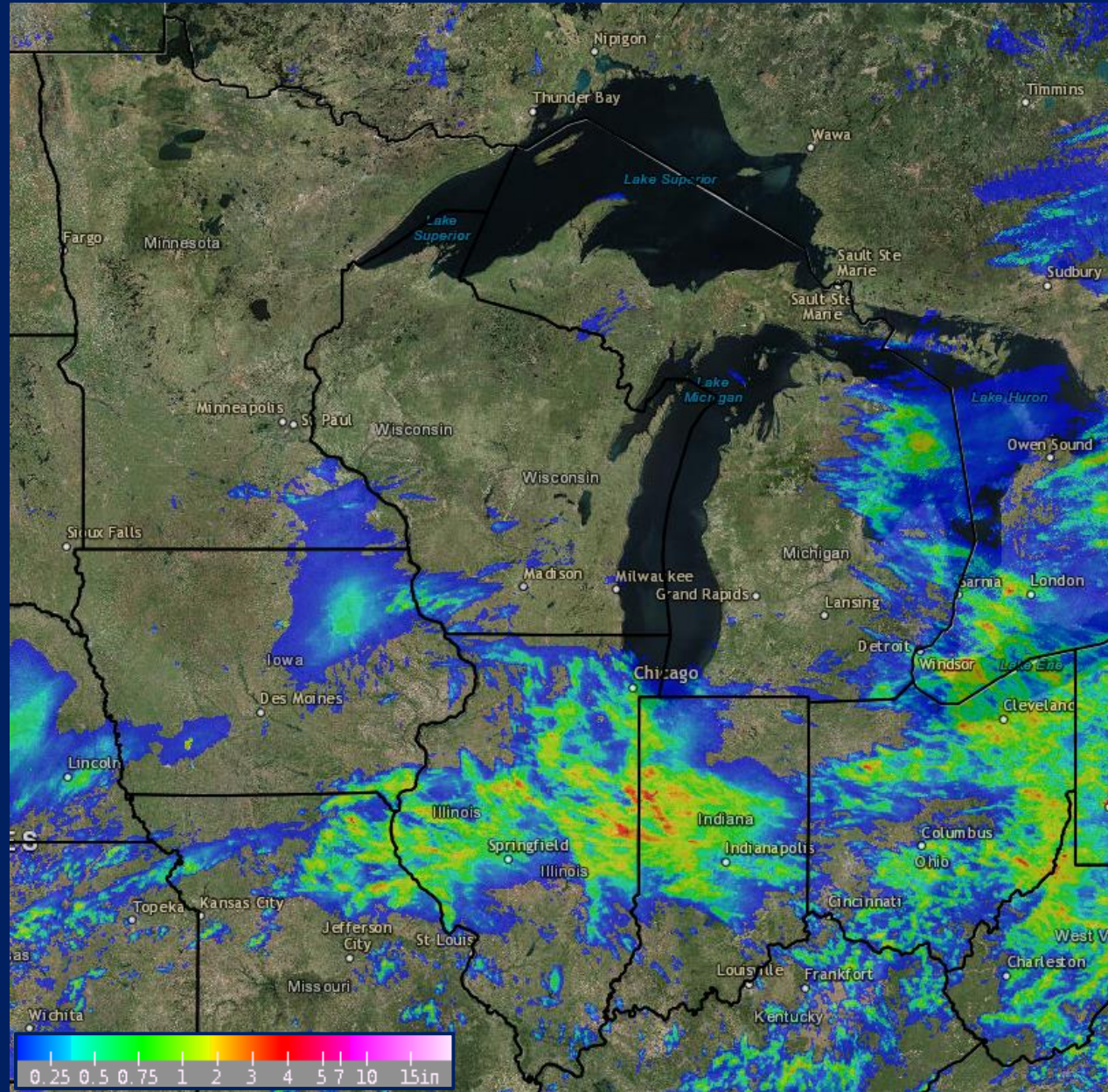


Morning Brief

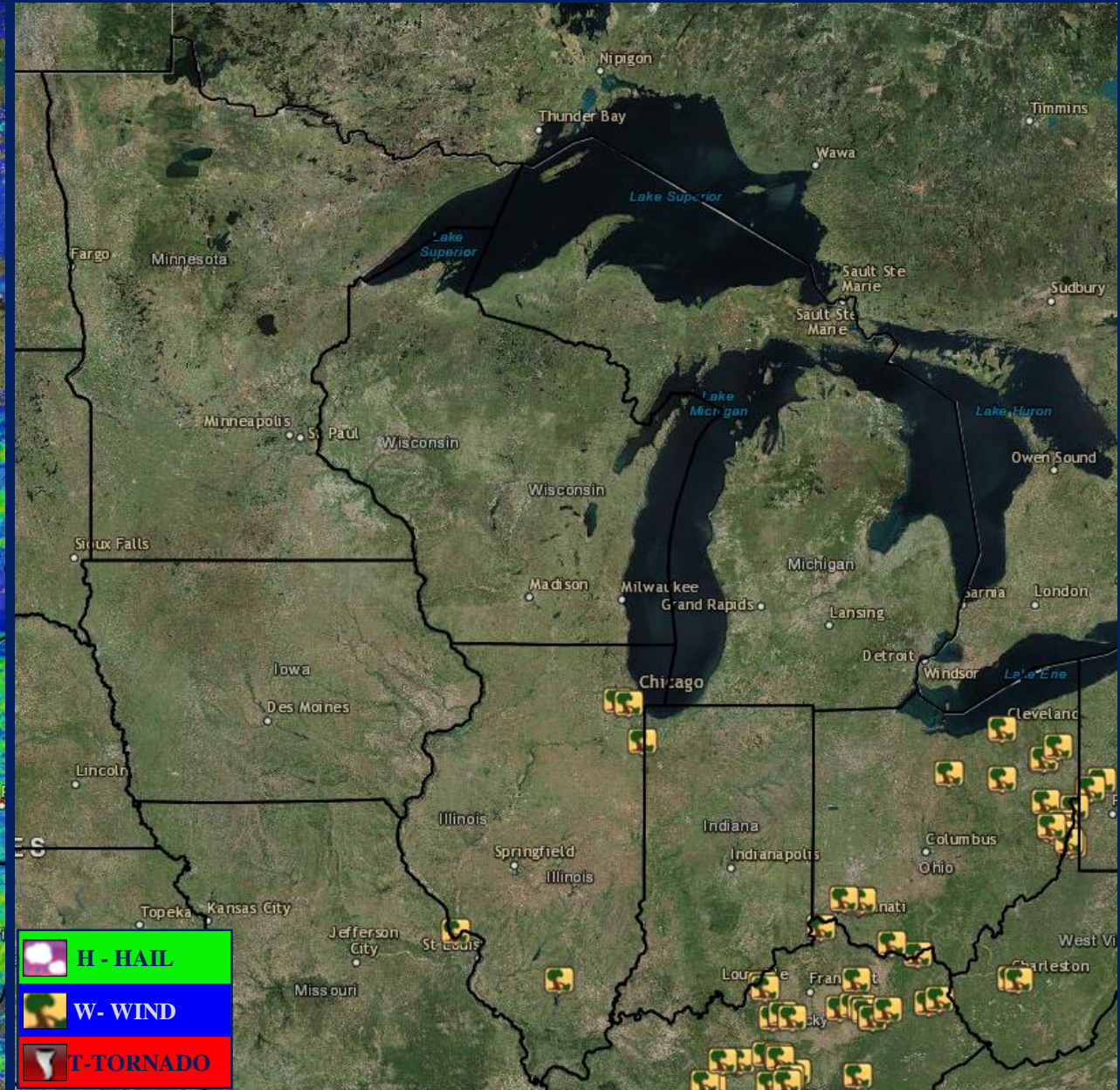
Friday, July 06, 2018

WEATHER SUMMARY (Last 24 Hours)

PRECIPITATION



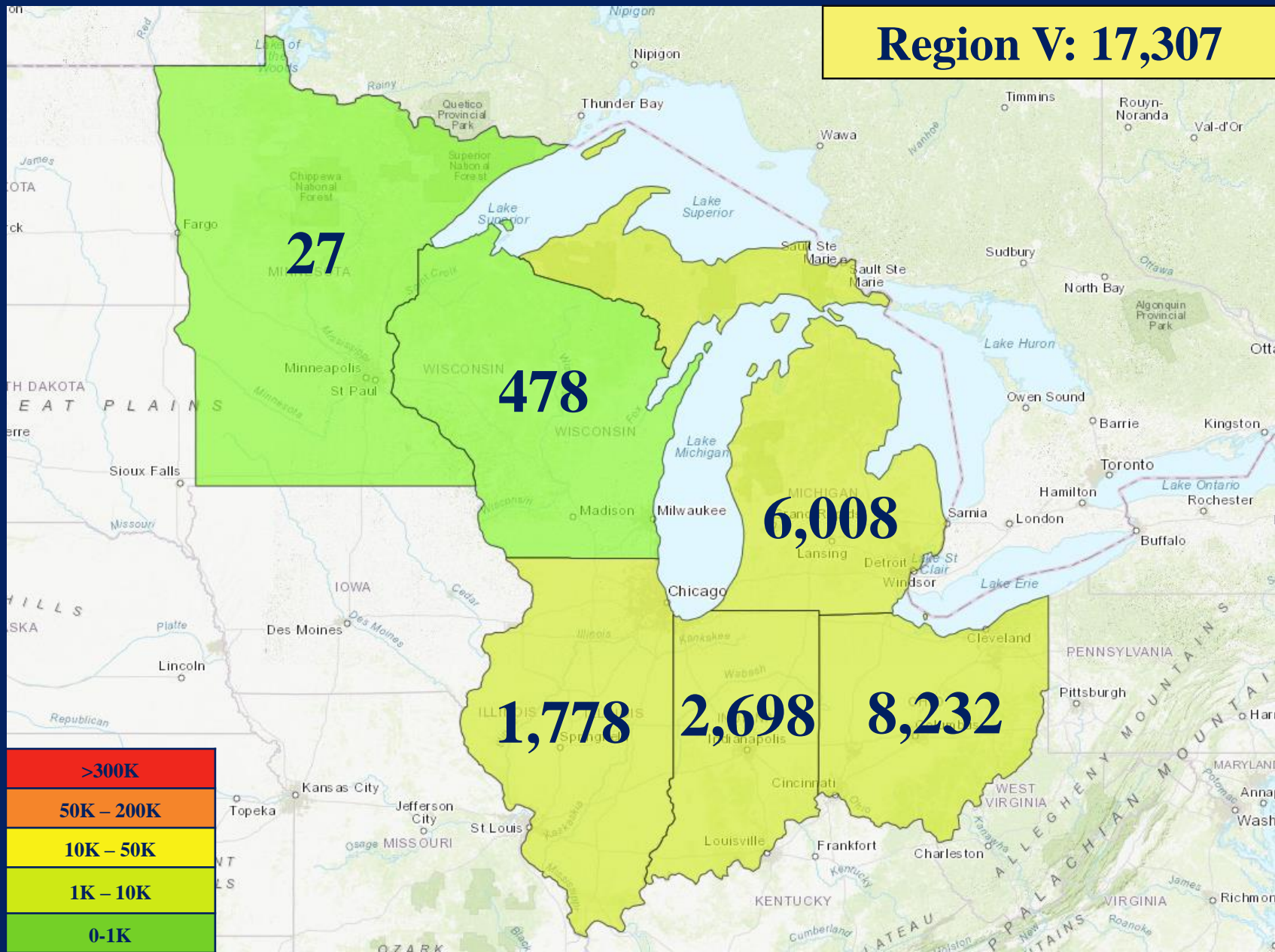
STORM REPORTS



INFRASTRUCTURE STATUS

POWER OUTAGES

CONDITIONS & THREATS



	AIRPORT STATUS	ROADWAY STATUS	NUCLEAR FACILITIES		
IL					
IN					
MI					
MN					
OH					
WI					
RV					
EXCESSIVE		MASS FLOODING	GENERAL EMGY		
SIGNIFICANT		FLOODING	SITE AREA EMGY		
MODERATE		SNOW/ICE	ALERT		
LOW		DEBRIS	UNUSUAL EVENT		
NORMAL		NORMAL	NORMAL		
GEOMAGNETIC STORMS		SOLAR RADIATION STORMS	RADIO BLACKOUTS		
DAY 1	None	S1 or GREATER	1%	R1 – R2	1%
			1%	R3 – R5	1%
DAY 2	None	S1 or GREATER	1%	R1 – R2	1%
			1%	R3 – R5	1%
G5 EXTREME		S5 EXTREME	R5 EXTREME		
G4 SEVERE		S4 SEVERE	R4 SEVERE		
G3 STRONG		S3 STRONG	R3 STRONG		
G2 MODERATE		S2 MODERATE	R2 MODERATE		
G1 MINOR		S1 MINOR	R1 MINOR		

REGION V READINESS



OPERATIONS STATUS

RRCC	NORMAL OPERATIONS
RWC	WATCH/STEADY STATE
IMAT	AVAILABLE
DCE	AVAILABLE
LNO	AVAILABLE
NTAS	NO ACTIVE ALERTS

STATE OPERATIONS STATUS

ILLINOIS	NORMAL OPERATIONS
INDIANA	NORMAL OPERATIONS
MICHIGAN	NORMAL OPERATIONS
MINNESOTA	PARTIAL ACTIVATION (Flooding)
OHIO	NORMAL OPERATIONS
WISCONSIN	NORMAL OPERATIONS

THIS WEEK

TRAINING & EXERCISES

NEXT WEEK

TRAINING:

- **Jul 10:** REP Planning Core Concepts Course (RPCC); Columbus, OH
- **Jul 10-11:** Leadership Skills for Non-Supervisors; Chicago, IL
- **Jul 10-12:** REP Post-Plume Planning Course (RPPP); Columbus, OH
- **Jul 13:** REP Ingestion Core Concepts Course (RICC); Columbus, OH
- **Jul 17-18:** L0552 Tribal Continuity of Operations (COOP); Cass Lake, MN
- **Jul 24:** L0583 Overview of Emergency Management for Tribal Leaders, Shelbyville, MI
- **Aug 22-23:** FERS/CSRS Retirement Course; Chicago, IL
- **Aug 24:** L0583 Overview of Emergency Management for Tribal Leaders; Cass Lake, MN

EXERCISES:

- **Jul 17-18:** Prairie Island Ingestion Pathway REPEX, Minnesota, Wisconsin
- **Jul 18:** Tenacious Badger Nuclear Power Plant Incident Seminar; Madison, WI
- **Aug 7:** LaSalle REPEX, Illinois

DISASTER DECLARATION STATUS

PDA SUMMARY: None

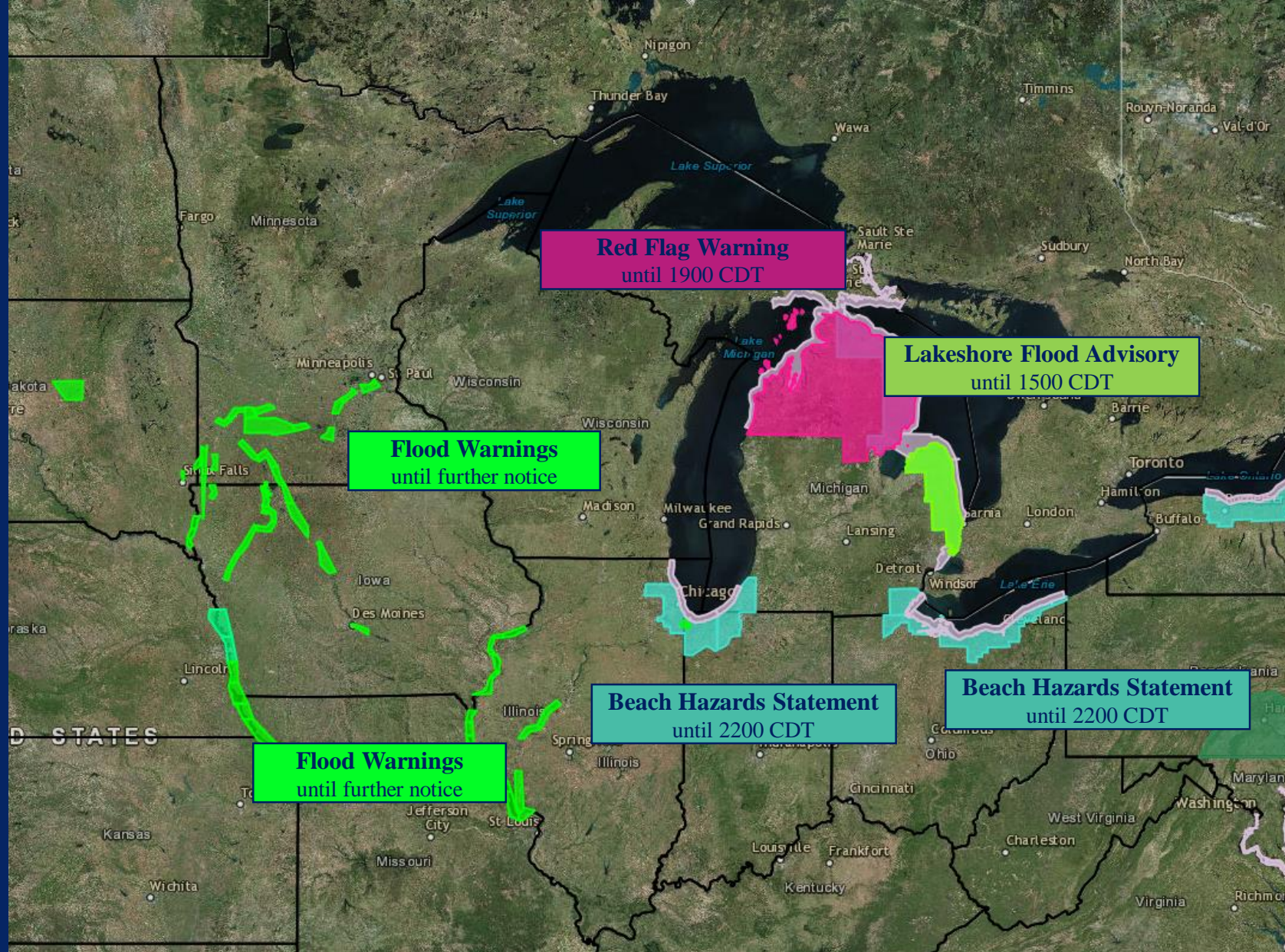
DECLARATION REQUESTS: None

DECLARATIONS:

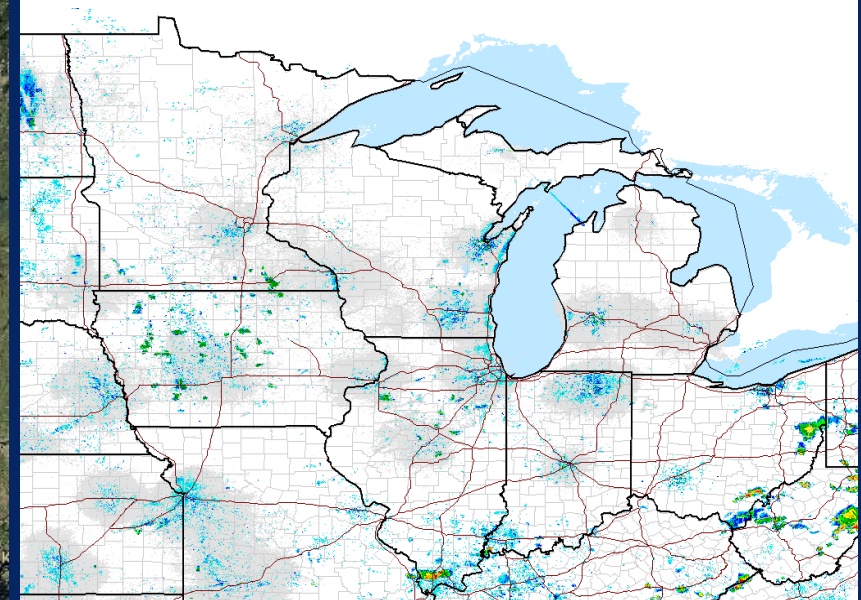
- **FEMA-4363-DR-IN.** On May 4, 2018, the President approved a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Indiana as a result of severe storms and flooding during the period of February 14-March 4, 2018. Individual Assistance for nine (9) counties, Public Assistance for 27 counties and Hazard Mitigation statewide. The FCO is David Samaniego.
 - Amendment #1: On June 5, 2018, thirteen (13) counties were added for Individual Assistance.
 - Amendment #2: On June 5, 2018, one (1) county was added for Public Assistance.
- **FEMA-4360-DR-OH.** On April 17, 2018, the President approved a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Ohio as a result of severe storms, flooding, and landslides during the period February 14-25. It provides Public Assistance for 18 counties and Hazard Mitigation statewide.. The FCO is Steven Johnson.
 - Amendment #1: On May 24, 2018, four (4) counties were added for Public Assistance.
- **FEMA-4343-DR-WI.** On October 07, 2017, the President approved a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Wisconsin as a result of severe storms, mudslides, flooding, and straight-line winds during the period of July 19-23. It provides Public Assistance for 11 counties and Hazard Mitigation statewide. The FCO is Janet Odeshoo.

CURRENT WEATHER

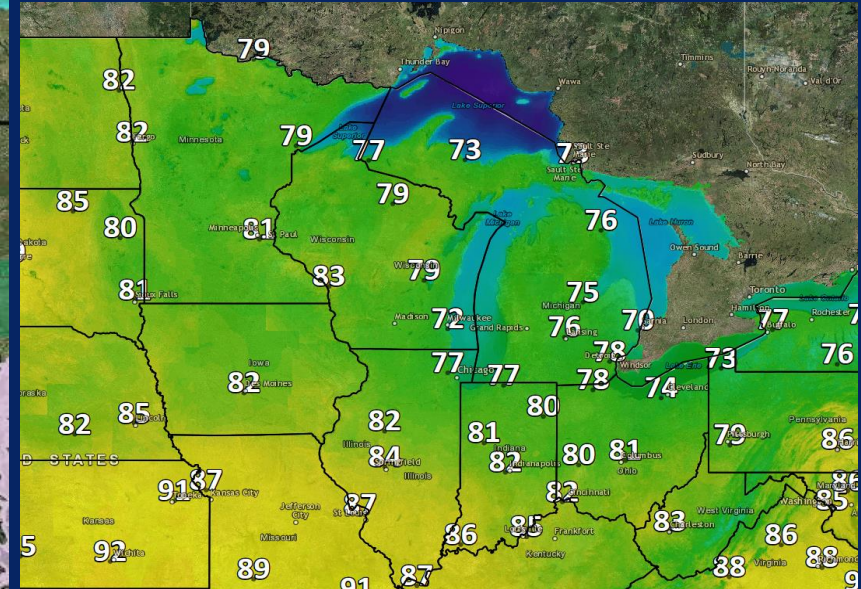
WATCHES & WARNINGS



RADAR

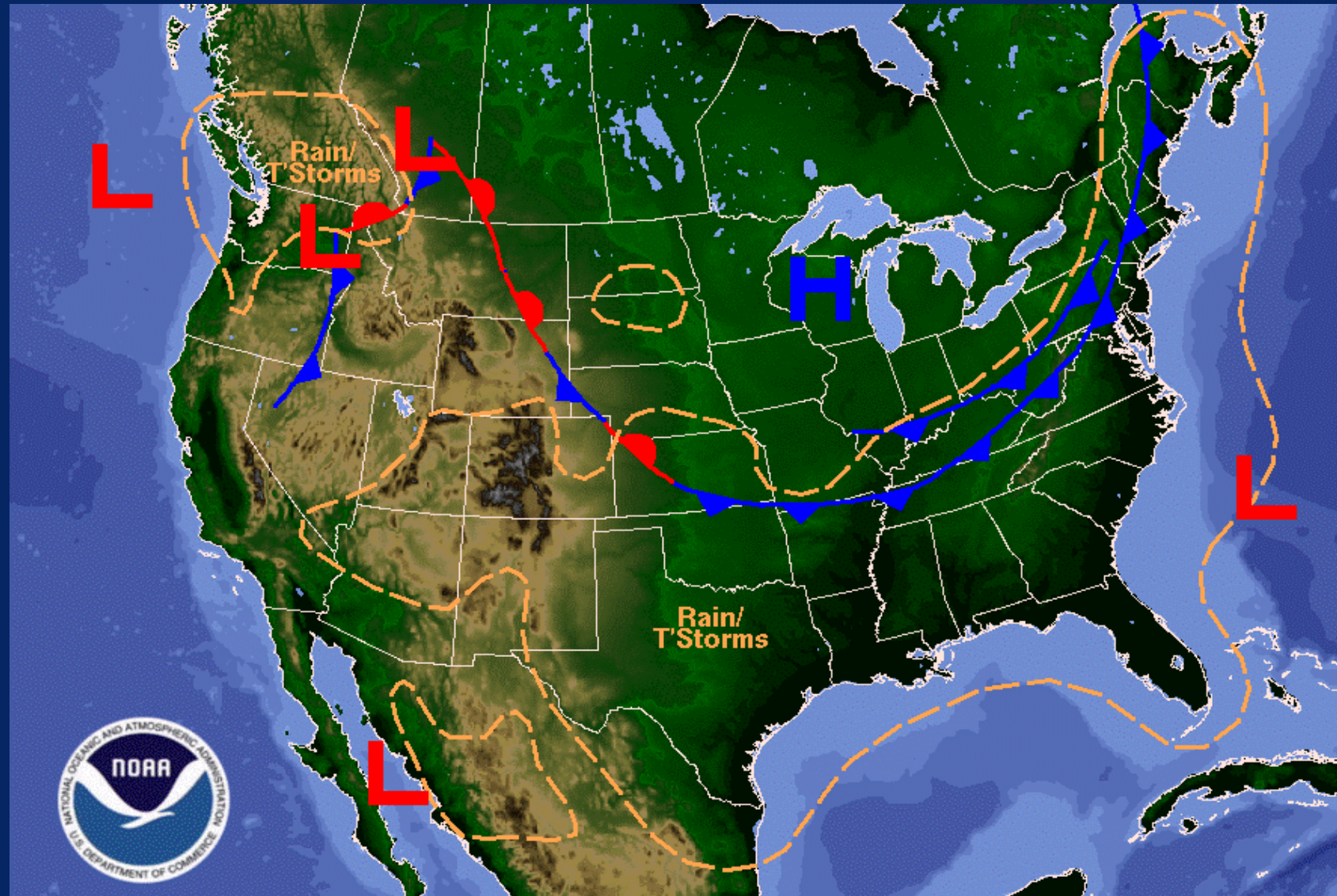


TODAY'S HIGH TEMPERATURES

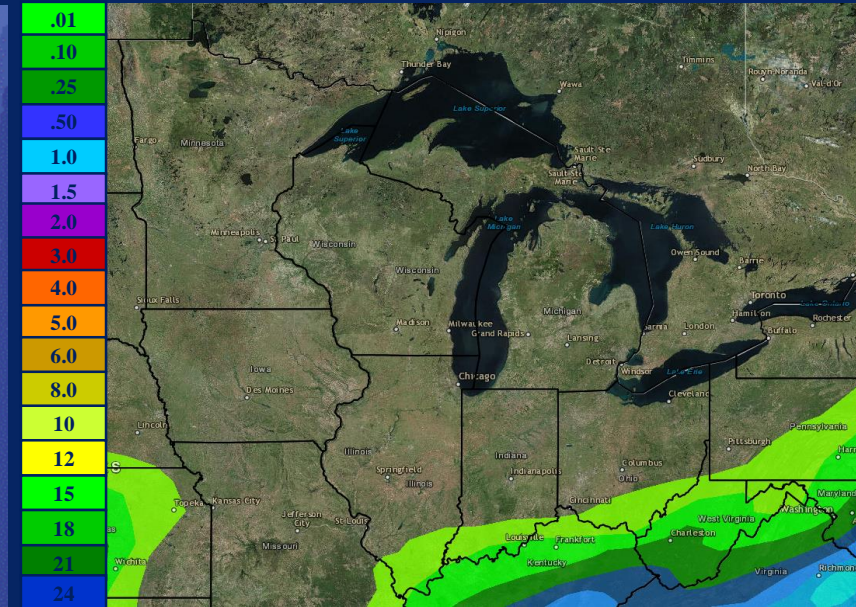


DAY 1 FORECAST

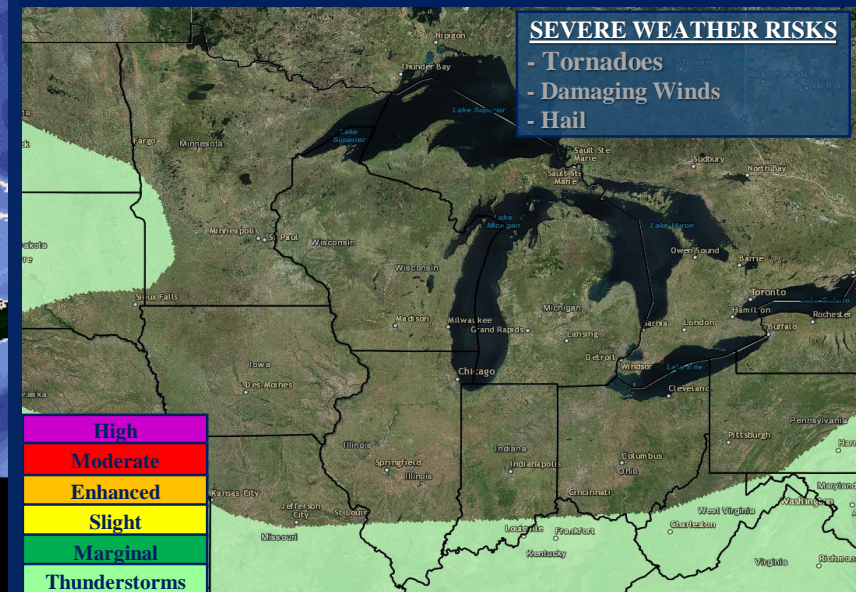
NATIONAL FORECAST



PRECIPITATION



CONVECTIVE OUTLOOK



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Jul 06, 2018, issued 4:32 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

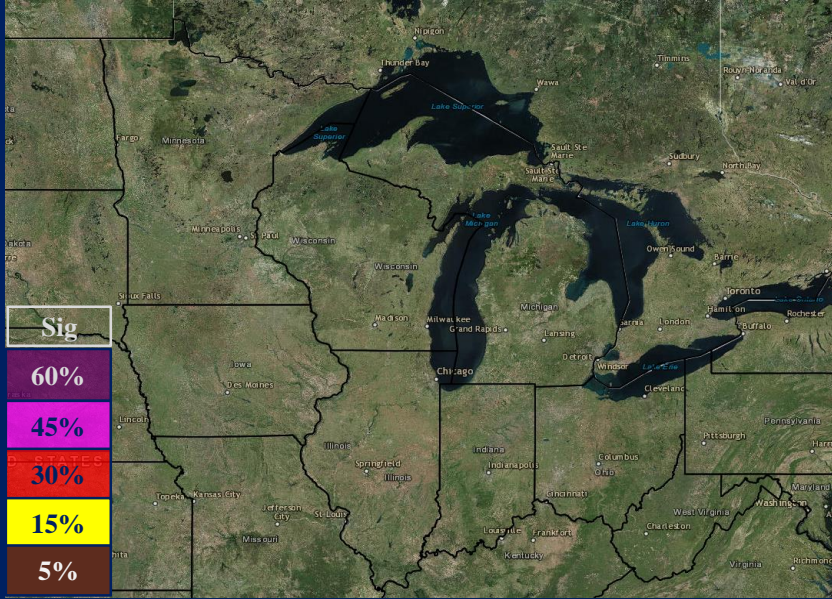
Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

DAY 1 CONVECTIVE OUTLOOK

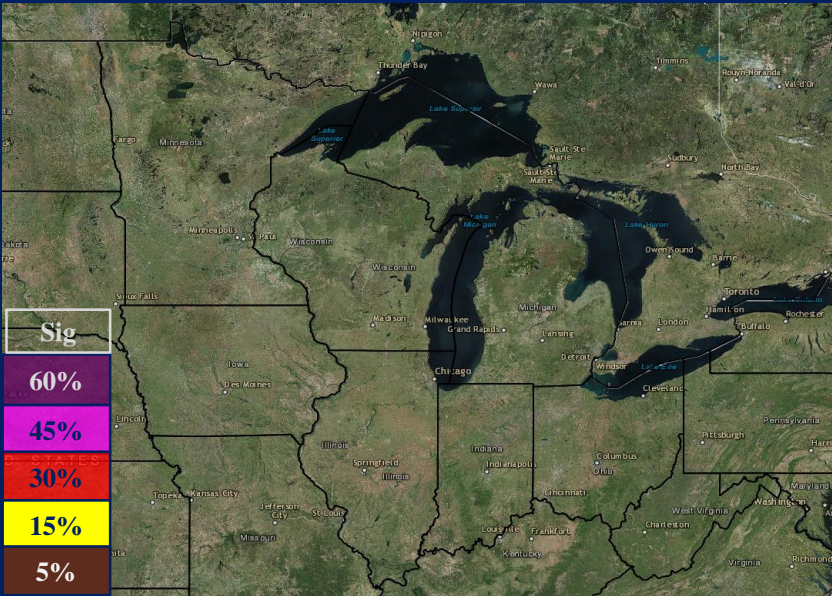
TORNADO



WIND

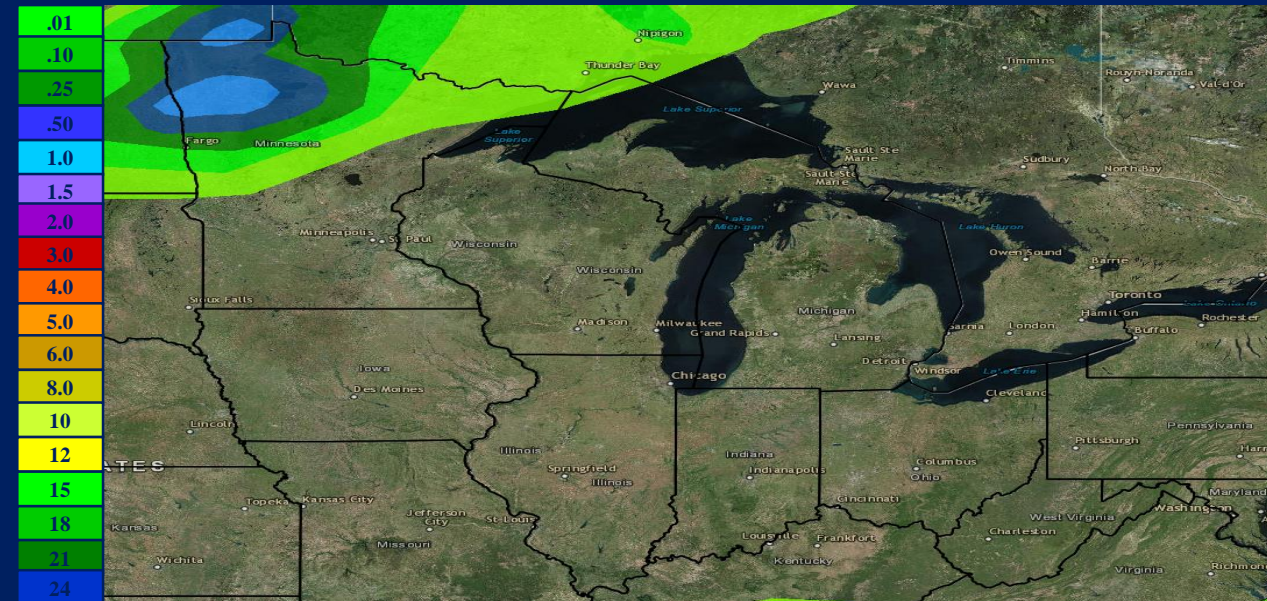


HAIL

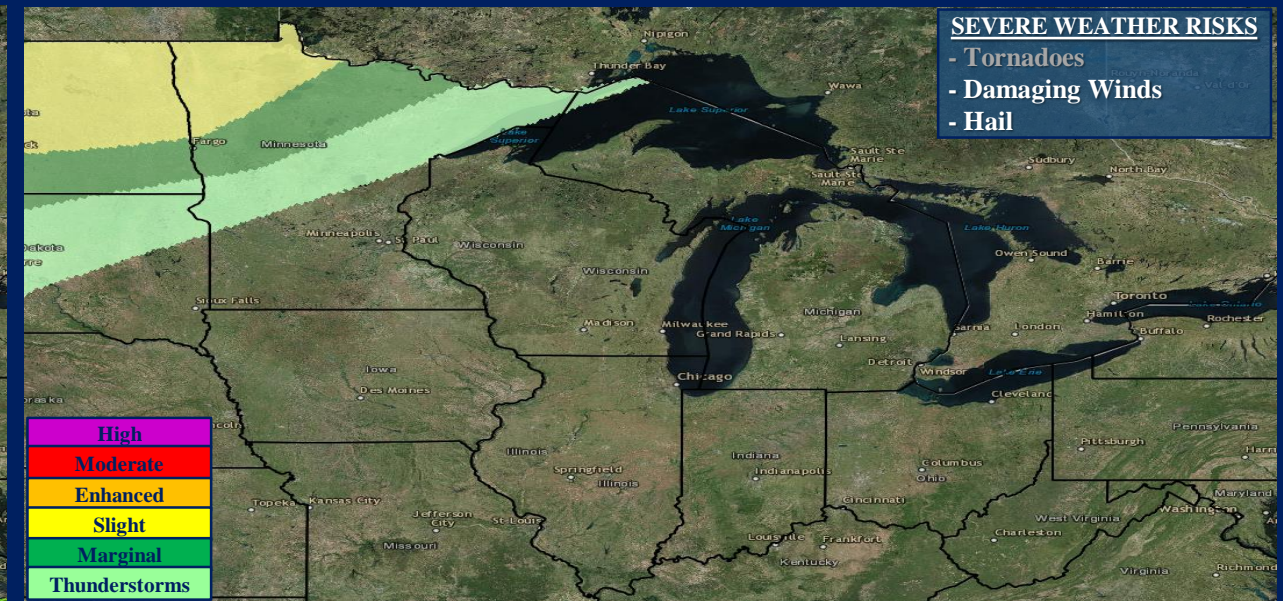


DAY 2 & 3 REGIONAL FORECAST

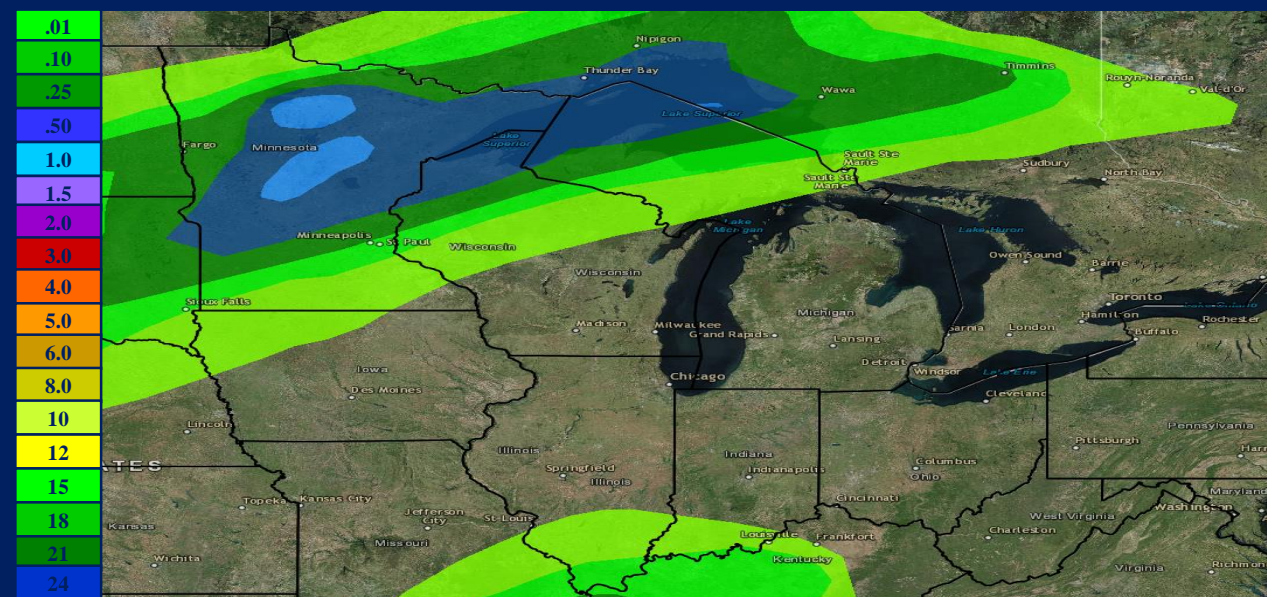
DAY 2 PRECIPITATION



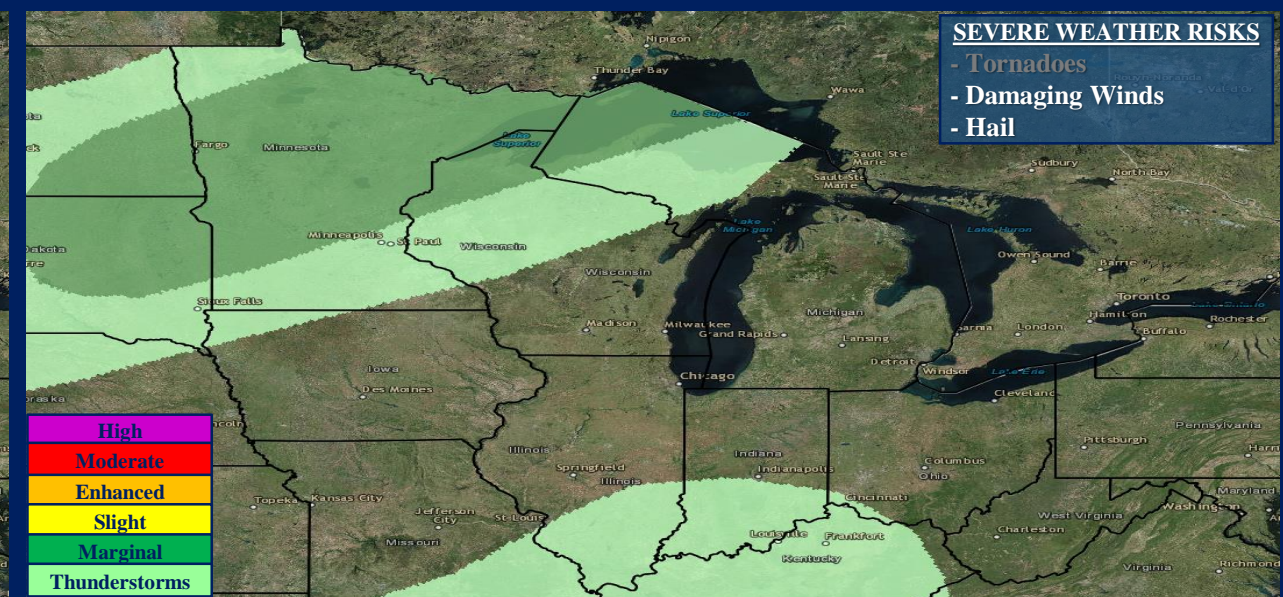
DAY 2 CONVECTIVE



DAY 3 PRECIPITATION

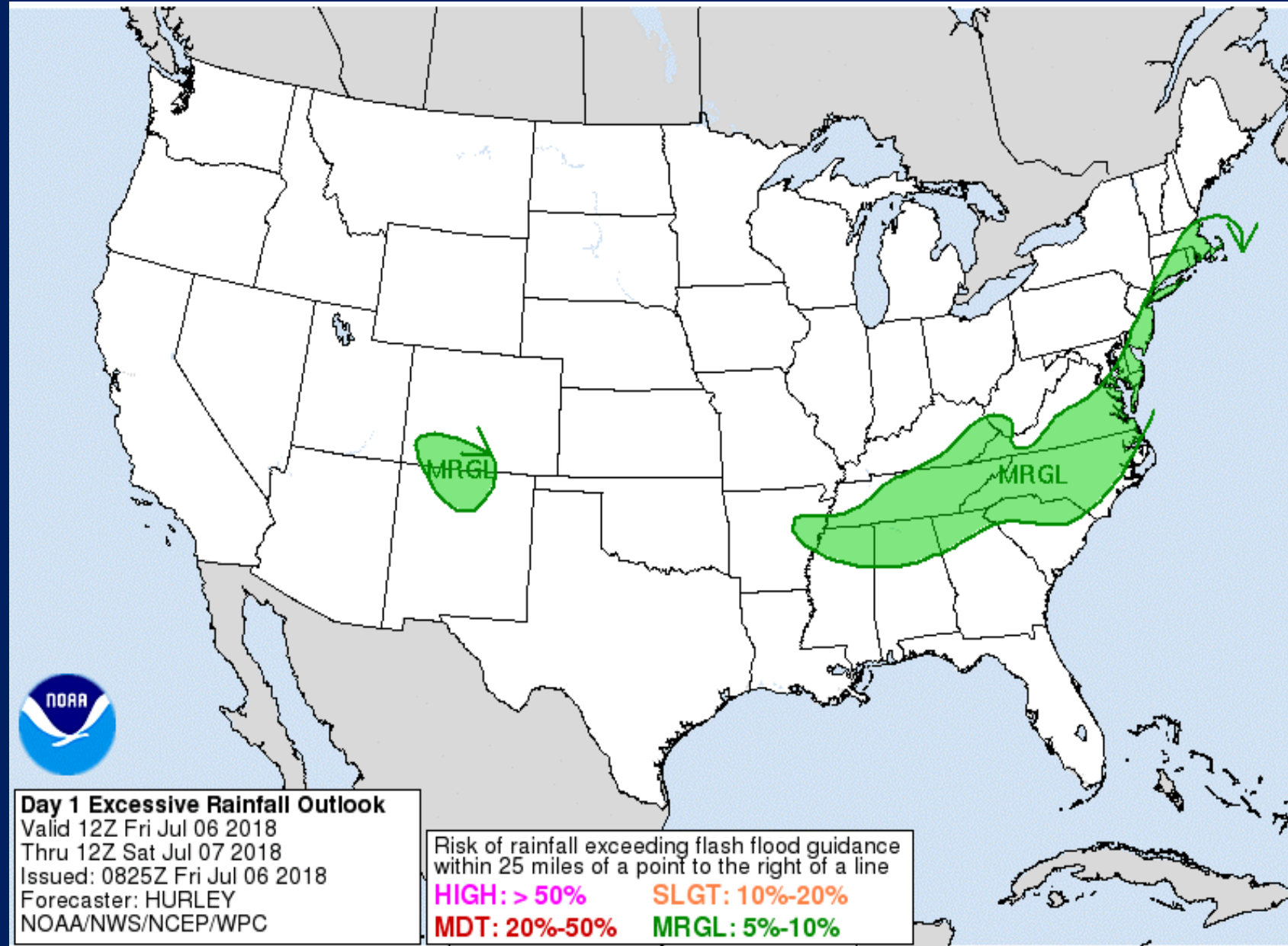


DAY 3 CONVECTIVE

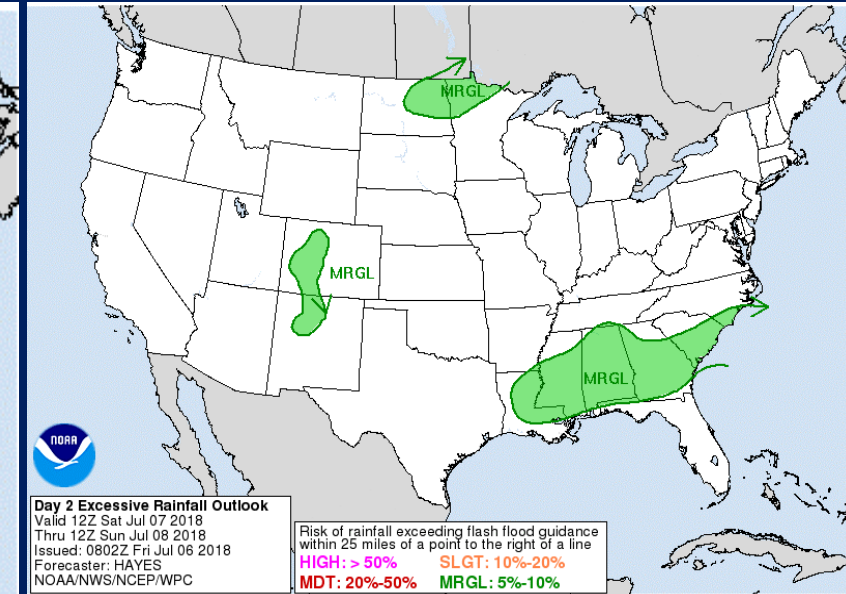


EXCESSIVE RAIN OUTLOOK

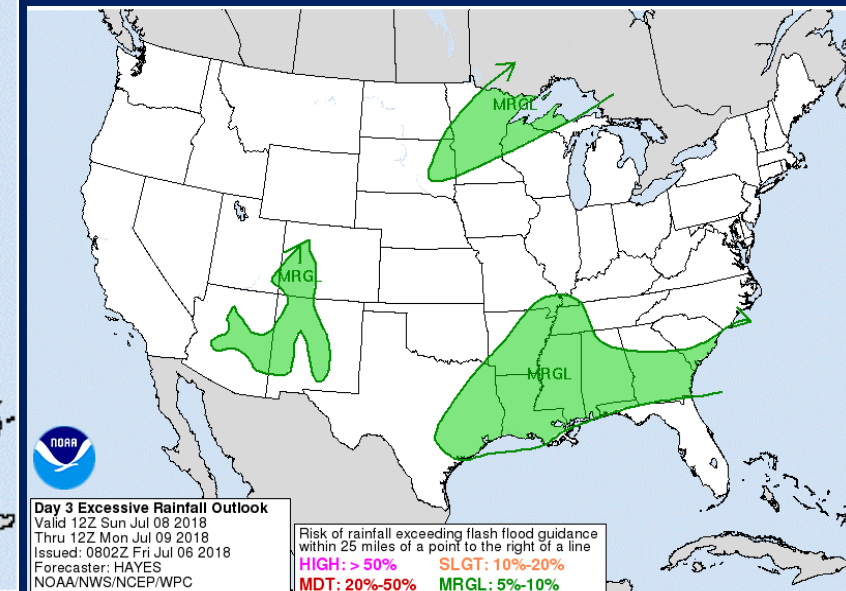
DAY 1



DAY 2

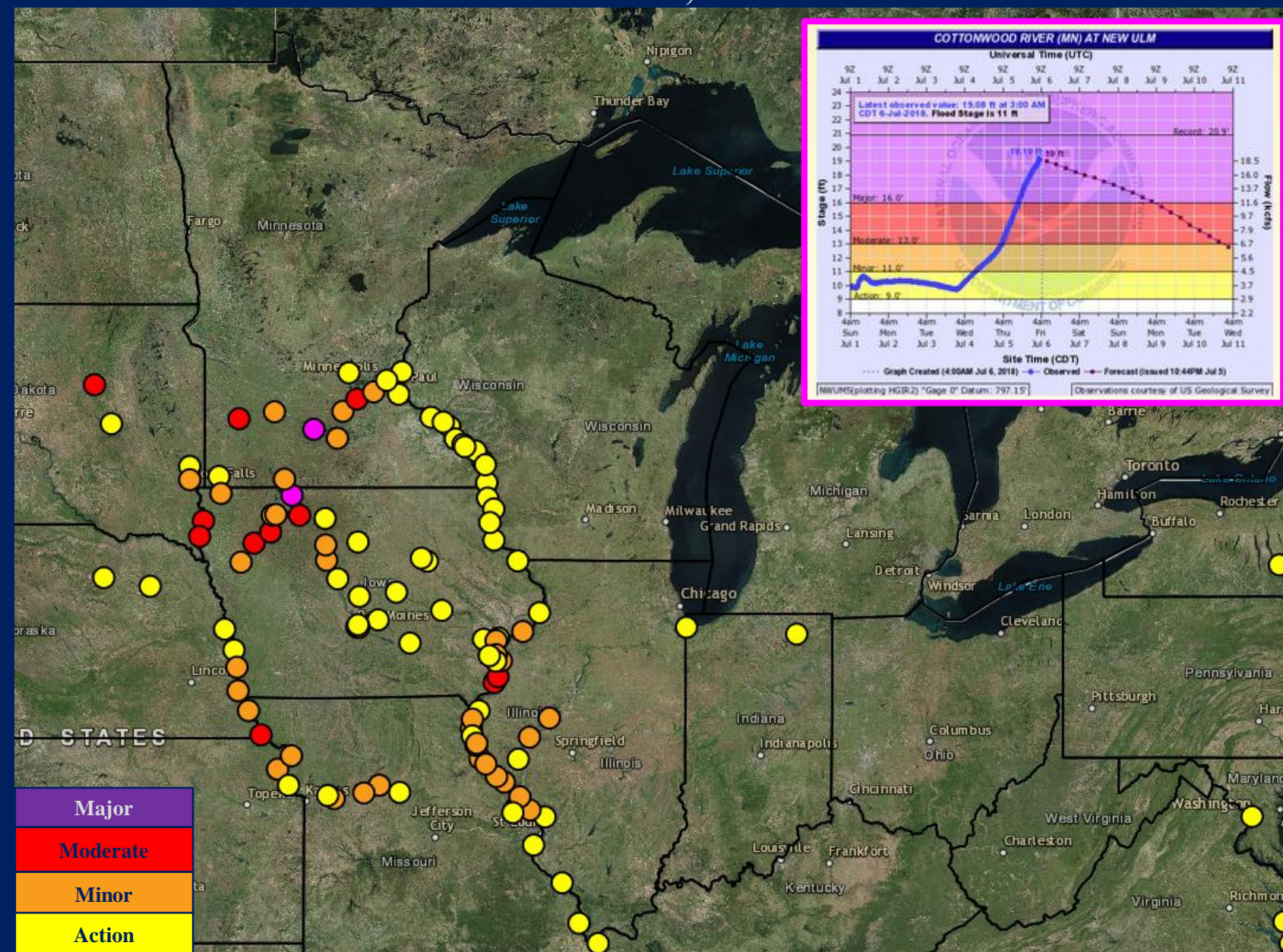


DAY 3

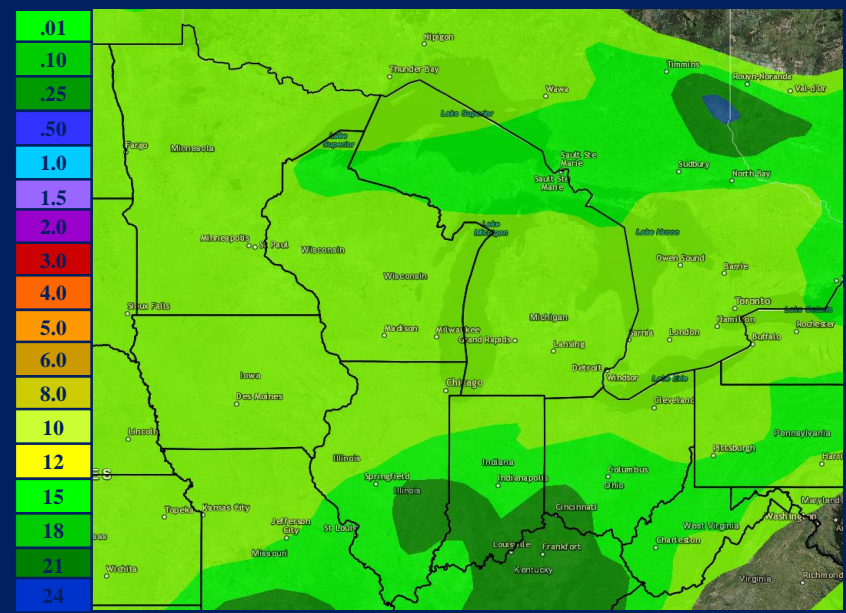


HYDROLOGIC OUTLOOK

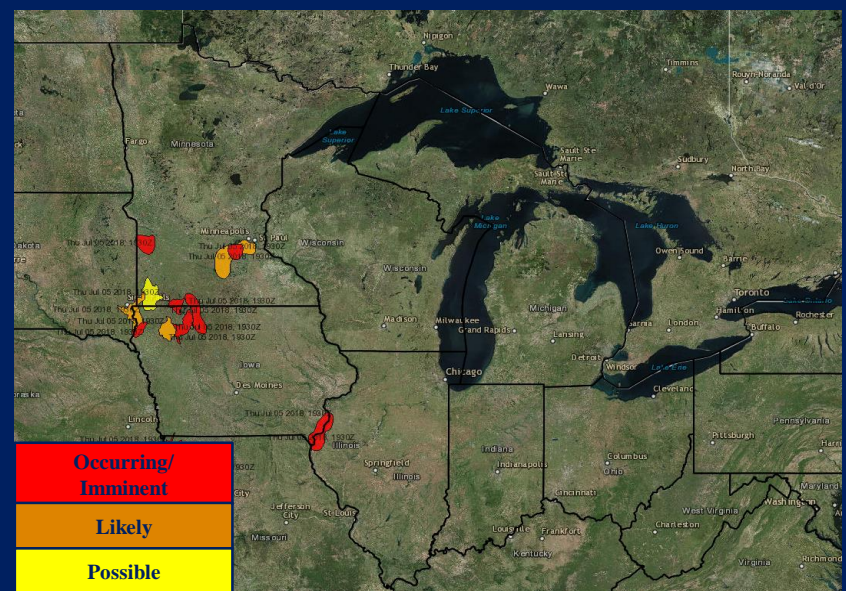
RIVER GAUGES, CURRENT



DAY 4-5 PRECIPITATION

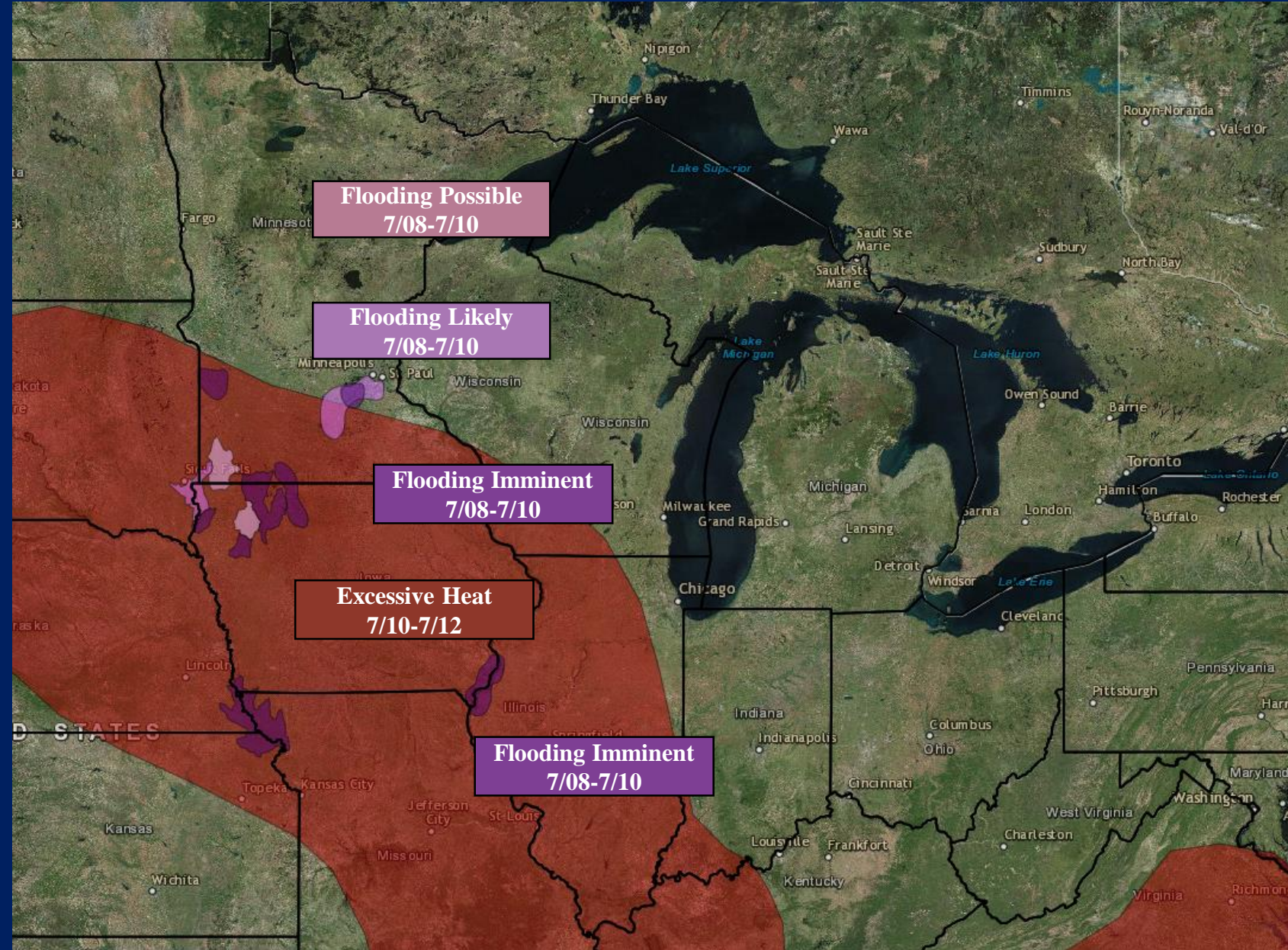


SIGNIFICANT RIVER FLOODING

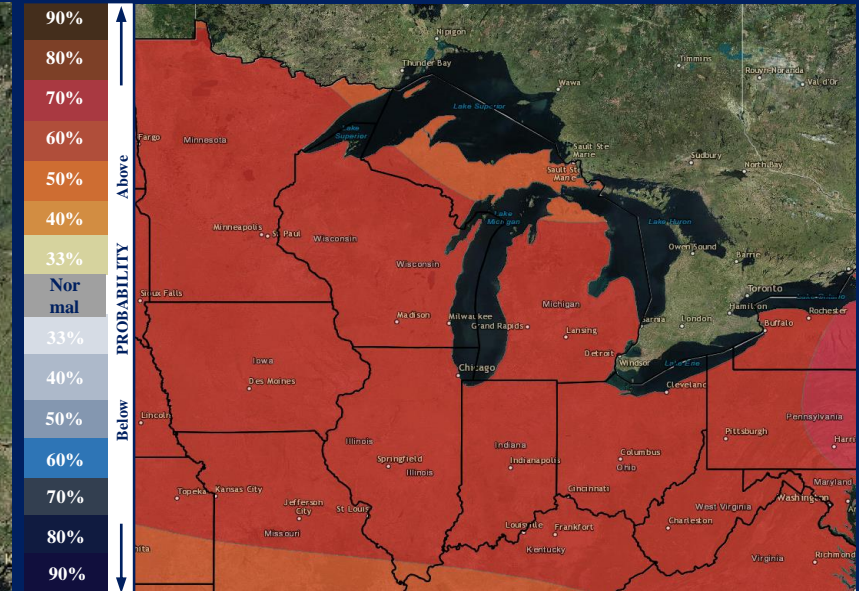


EXTENDED OUTLOOK

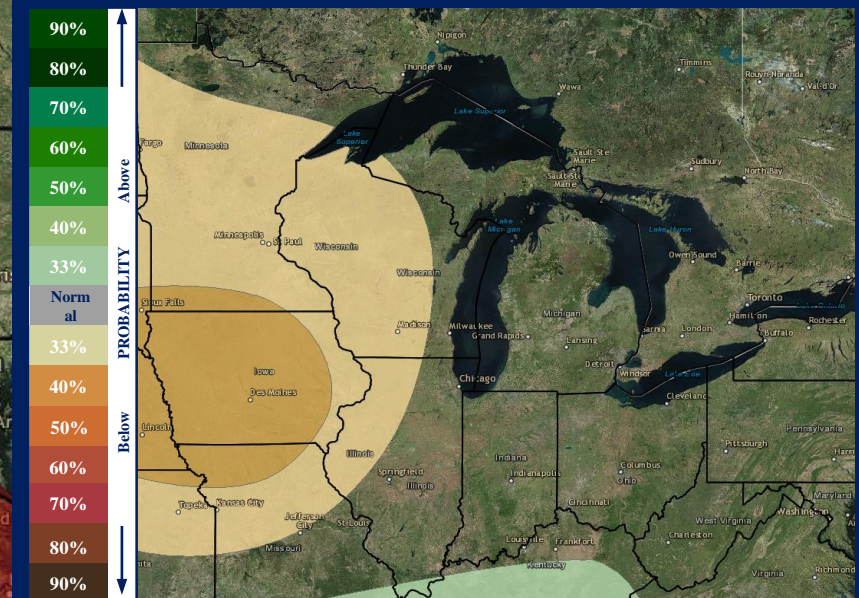
3-7 DAY HAZARDS OUTLOOK



DAY 6-10 TEMPERATURE



DAY 6-10 PRECIPITATION



HURRICANE ACTIVITY

ACTIVE STORMS, & HURRICANES

Atlantic Tropical Cyclones
and Disturbances

Disturbance #1
40% Chance of Cyclone
Formation in 48 hours

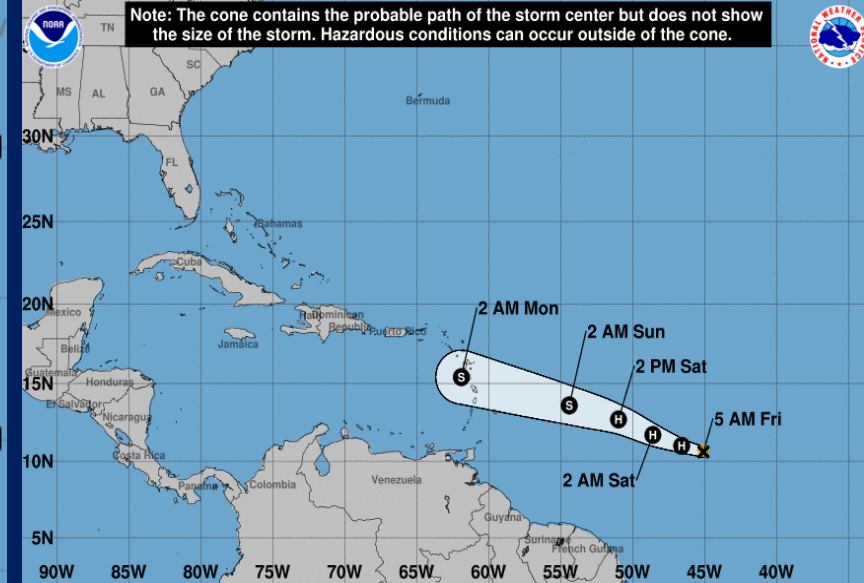


HURRICANE BERYL

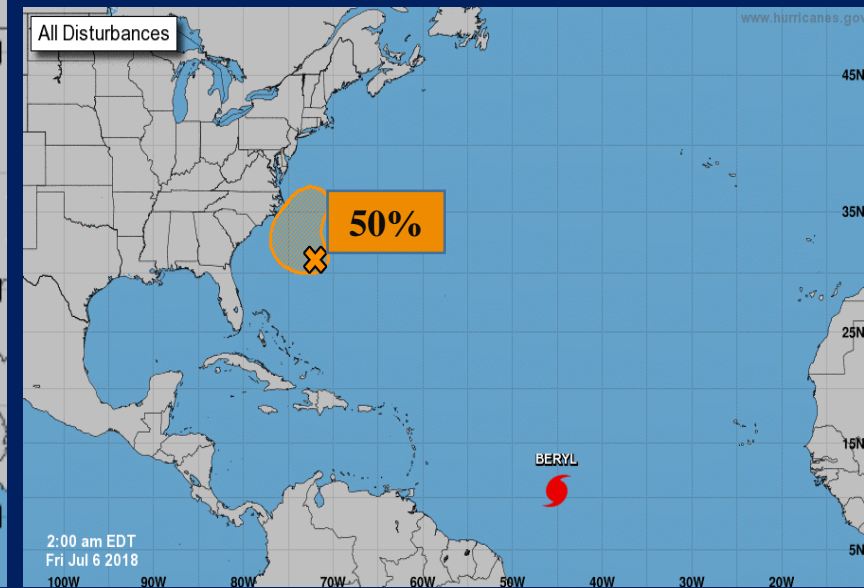


4:54 am EDT
Fri Jul 6 2018

2-DAY OUTLOOK



5-DAY OUTLOOK





FEMA's Mission:
*Helping people before, during, and after
a disaster.*

THE HOMELAND SECURITY *NEWS CLIPS*

PREPARED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BY BULLETIN INTELLIGENCE WWW.BULLETININTELLIGENCE.COM/DHS

TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 6, 2018 5:00 AM EDT

TODAY'S EDITION

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LEADING DHS NEWS

Trump Administration Vows To Reunite Nearly 3,000 Separated Families Per Judge’s Order

By Alan Gomez

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

The Trump administration official in charge of caring for undocumented minors separated from their parents at the border said on Thursday that his agency must reunite nearly 3,000 families, a sharp increase from the roughly 2,300 his agency was contemplating as of last week.

Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said the work has been further complicated by the nation’s “disjointed” immigration laws, the broad scope of the judge’s “unprecedented” order, requests from members of Congress to tour HHS facilities, delays verifying familial relationships, and “unreliable” information provided by minors who are being held in detention.

But Azar insisted that his agency will fully comply with a ruling from District Judge Dana Sabrow to reunite all children

separated from their parents under President Donald Trump’s “zero-tolerance” policy by the end of this month. The judge ordered the department to reunite children under age 5 by Tuesday, and all minors by July 26.

“We will use every minute of time we have to confirm the parentage of those individuals ... and to confirm that those parents are actually suitable for reunification, and then we will comply with the court’s order and reunify them,” he said during a conference call with reporters. “We will comply with the artificial deadlines established by the courts.”

The number of children in question has changed significantly in recent weeks.

In early June, U.S. Customs and Border Protection estimated that 2,342 children had been separated from their parents under the “zero tolerance” policy carried out the departments of Justice and Homeland Security. On June 20, Azar testified before Congress and said they had reunited several hundred families, leaving 2,053 children in HHS custody. On June 26, he testified again before Congress, saying the number had fallen to 2,047.

But on Thursday, Azar said his department was forced to examine the cases of all 11,800 minors in its custody because the judge ordered all children to be reunited with their parents, even those separated before the “zero tolerance” policy went into full effect in May.

Most of the cases, he said, were minors who crossed the border on their own. But he said close to 3,000 may have been separated, leading to the higher estimate. About 100 of them are under age 5, Azar said.

Now, his department is working case-by-case to ensure that each minor is indeed related to their purported parent. Azar said that can usually be accomplished by checking paperwork, such as birth certificates and consular documents. But he said that process can be slow, given the time it takes to secure official documents and the uncertainty of stories told by some kids.

He said some minors, for example, are labeled as separated from their parents. But when inspecting cases more closely, those parents had separated from their child before crossing the southwest border, meaning the U.S. government did not separate them and has no responsibility to reunite them.

More: Trump administration racing the clock to reunite 2,000 children with parents

To speed up the family verification process, Azar said his officials are doing DNA checks of all alleged parent-child relationships. That process has been used in the past when there were questions about familial relationships, so Azar said it was the best option given their time constraints.

A private contractor does a cheek swab of each person, then compares their DNA to verify the relationship. Jonathan White, assistant secretary for preparedness and response at HHS, said those tests are necessary to ensure that human traffickers posing as parents aren’t reunited with children.

“We expect that a great majority of these parents are exactly who they claim to be,” White said. “But we have to protect children from people who would prey on them.”

Azar said the department has reassigned 230 workers to the reunification process and is completing that comprehensive case review. He said officials will soon begin sending minors to Department of Homeland Security facilities that can legally house parents and minors together. He said Homeland Security officials have already begun transferring parents to facilities closer to their children to speed up the reunification process once everybody’s relationship is established.

Trump also weighed in Thursday morning, urging Congress to reform the nation’s “insane” immigration laws that allow foreigners to apply for asylum or get a hearing before an immigration judge to fight deportation orders.

“When people, with or without children, enter our Country, they must be told to leave without our ... Country being forced to endure a long and costly trial,” the president

wrote. “Tell the people ‘OUT,’ and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn. Hiring thousands of ‘judges’ does not work and is not acceptable – only Country in the World that does this!”

Most developed nations have some form of refugee and asylum process. Canada, Turkey, Germany, and other nations have taken in more refugees in recent years as the global migrant crisis has mushroomed, while the U.S. has made significant cuts to its programs.

U.S. Moving Some Detained Migrants To Sites Closer To Their Children: HHS Secretary

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Lawmakers Demand Details About Every Migrant Child Separated From Parents

By Colby Itkowitz

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

Two House Oversight Committee leaders are pressing key Trump Cabinet officials for a detailed accounting of the thousands of children separated from their parents since the administration began its “zero tolerance” policy to prosecute every illegal border crossing.

In a bipartisan letter, sent Thursday to Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen M. Nielsen, Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, they make 11 specific requests for information about every single child — including their age, gender, and current location. Since this humanitarian crisis began in April, such details have not been available.

“Like many Americans, we want to ensure that we can reunite children who have been separated from their families as expeditiously as possible,” wrote Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), chairman of the Government Operations Subcommittee on the Oversight panel and Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (Md.), ranking Democrat on the full Oversight and Government Reform committee.

The lawmakers also want to know the age and gender of the parents of each child, the date the parent was detained and when the child was separated. They also want a full accounting of all the locations the child has been held since families were separated.

Lawmakers have complained about the lack of access to information and the facilities where parents are detained and children are sheltered. Democratic senators sent Nielsen and Azar a similar letter last week asking for weekly updates on the agency’s reunification efforts.

In a call with reporters Thursday morning, Azar said HHS is working “expeditiously” to reunite the fewer than

3,000 children separated from their parents, 100 of whom are under 5 years old.

Azar's comments came as HHS scrambles to meet a court-appointed deadline to reunite children with their parents being held in Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers awaiting trial. Any children already released from HHS care were either sponsored by another family member already living in the United States or deported along with the parent with whom they crossed the border, Azar said.

No children have yet been reunited with a parent who is detained by ICE, but to meet the court order, many will probably be held together in the detention centers. To streamline that process, Azar said parents are being moved to facilities "extremely close" to the shelters where their children are living.

A federal judge in California last week ordered the government to reunify all minor children with their parents within 30 days, and within 14 days for children under 5 years old. Azar said that the agency is working to meet that deadline but that doing so prevents them from its rigorous "standard or even truncated vetting process." Azar said the agency has deployed additional resources to read through the case files of all the children and attempt to verify parentage, including using DNA tests.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement, housed within HHS, has been responsible for the care of all the children separated from their parents at the border since the inception of the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy. The small agency typically takes in older minors who cross the border illegally on their own and are classified as "unaccompanied alien children." But for several months, thousands of children in their charge were unwillingly taken from their parents, which medical experts have warned can create long-lasting trauma.

Azar said HHS's mission is to "protect the welfare of the children with whom we've been entrusted."

"We want this to be as compassionate a process as humanly can be," he said. "As broken as our immigration system is, we still want to treat people as well as humanly possible going through this difficult process."

US To Reunite Migrant Families As Immigration Politics Boil

By Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

Stung by a public outcry, the Trump administration said Thursday it will meet court-ordered deadlines for reuniting families separated at the border, even as the politics of immigration remained at a boil.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar told reporters that his department is ready to reunite children in its

care with their parents, starting next Tuesday with those under age 5.

However, Azar warned that entire families may remain in the custody of immigration authorities for extended periods, even those who are claiming asylum. Before the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy, migrants seeking asylum under U.S. laws were often granted temporary release as their cases were resolved.

Azar also used a new and much higher number for migrant kids separated from their parents, "under 3,000" as compared with the figure of 2,047 he provided at a Senate hearing last week. Of those, about 100 are under five years old.

He said the new number reflected a more thorough look by HHS at its case files, and over a longer time period, to comply with the court order that families be reunited. That order had been issued after his Senate testimony.

Nonetheless, Azar's effort to provide a more accurate accounting only seemed to create more confusion.

HHS has long been charged with caring for unaccompanied minors crossing the border. Usually, the agency places children with a U.S. relative or foster family while their immigration cases are decided. This year, HHS also took on the role of caring for children separated from their parents as a consequence of the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy.

Azar said the new number reflects a case-by-case audit of about 11,800 migrant children in its care, over a longer time frame. About 80 percent of those children arrived unaccompanied at the border, and many are teenage boys.

Azar said the audit was done to make sure the agency was in full compliance with a court order issued after he had testified in the Senate, giving the lower number.

U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw in San Diego has ordered the youngest children reunited by Tuesday of next week, and the rest before the end this month. A court hearing on the administration's efforts and plans is scheduled for tomorrow.

Azar called the deadlines "extreme" but said HHS will comply after an extensive effort to identify children in its shelters who were separated from their parents, to confirm parentage, and to screen parents for criminal violations or other problems that could result in harm to kids.

"While I know there has been talk of confusion, any confusion is due to a breakdown in our immigration system and court orders. It's not here," Azar said, adding that migrant children are being well cared for in HHS facilities.

Once HHS reunifies the families, they will be in the custody of the Department of Homeland Security, Azar said. DHS has already started moving some parents to facilities closer to facilities where their children are being kept.

Azar said his department has more than 230 people working on just trying to match children with their parents.

DNA testing is being used to speed up the matches, because it's faster than verifying paper documentation.

Shortly before Azar spoke, President Donald Trump took to Twitter, showing no signs of backing away from "zero tolerance."

Only recently, the president had told Republicans in Congress to stop wasting their time on immigration until after November's elections, but now Trump is insisting that Congress "FIX OUR INSANE IMMIGRATION LAWS NOW!"

Congress must pass smart, fast and reasonable Immigration Laws now. Law Enforcement at the Border is doing a great job, but the laws they are forced to work with are insane. When people, with or without children, enter our Country, they must be told to leave without our.....— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

He called current immigration laws "insane," saying that "Congress must pass smart, fast and reasonable Immigration Laws now."

The tweets seemed to carry an ominous message for border crossers.

.....Country being forced to endure a long and costly trial. Tell the people "OUT," and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn. Hiring thousands of "judges" does not work and is not acceptable – only Country in the World that does this!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

"When people, with or without children, enter our Country, they must be told to leave without our...Country being forced to endure a long and costly trial," Trump wrote. "Tell the people "OUT," and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn."

Congress has been unable to advance immigration legislation going back to the George W. Bush years. Republicans are divided among hardliners and business-oriented moderates who don't see rising immigration as a threat. Democrats are pushing for a path to citizenship for people living in the country illegally, which many Republicans deride as "amnesty."

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HHS Secretary Says Trump Administration Rushing To Reunite Migrant Families Separated At The Border

By Maria Sacchetti

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said Thursday that officials are racing against a federal judge's "extreme" deadlines to reunite "under 3,000" migrant children separated from their parents at the U.S. border.

Azar did not provide a precise number of children who have been separated from their parents under the Trump administration, but he said hundreds of government employees are working verify that information, including through DNA testing. The children are being held in shelters overseen by HHS. Their parents are in federal immigration jails.

Azar signaled that, once reunited, the families will likely remain together in the Department of Homeland Security's custody to await asylum interviews or deportation hearings.

U.S. District Judge Dana M. Sabraw last week ordered the Trump administration to reunite parents and children by July 26. The ruling stemmed from a class-action lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Under the same ruling, about 100 children under 5 years old must be handed over to their parents by Tuesday night, Azar said. Homeland Security is relocating parents to facilities near the child shelters so they can be reunited by the court's deadline.

"We want this to be as compassionate a process as it humanly can be," he said in a conference call with reporters.

The judge also prohibited the government from deporting parents without their children unless the adults left the United States voluntarily. A status hearing is scheduled for Friday.

The Trump administration separated most of the families starting in May when it unveiled a "zero tolerance" policy that brought criminal charges against all migrants who crossed the border illegally, even if they were traveling with children.

Azar said Health and Human Services is currently caring for more than 11,800 minors through a network of shelters nationwide. More than 80 percent of the minors are teenagers, mostly males, who crossed the border alone.

In his ruling, Sabraw called the separations "chaotic," with children as young as infants taken from their parents and held in shelters overseen by HHS.

This week the ACLU expressed concern the federal government is pressuring migrant parents to agree to be deported in order to regain custody of their children. Federal immigration officials have denied doing that, saying they are only seeking to comply with the judge's ruling.

Life In Trump Cabinet: Perks, Pestering, Power, Putdowns

By Jonathan Lemire, Catherine Lucey And Zeke Miller

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

WASHINGTON (AP) — Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross came in for an Oval Office tongue-lashing after he used a mundane soup can as a TV prop. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis got overruled by President Donald Trump's announcement that a new "Space Force" is in the offing.

Environmental Protection Agency head Scott Pruitt caught a sharp admonition from Trump to “knock it off” after his ethics problems dominated cable television.

Welcome to the Trump Cabinet, where broad opportunities to reshape the government and advance a conservative agenda come with everyday doses of presidential adulation, humiliation, perks and pestering. Sometimes all at roughly the same time.

Members of the president’s Cabinet have a measure of prestige and power. They can streak across the skies in Air Force One with Trump, act unilaterally to roll back regulations not to their liking and set policies with far-reaching implications for millions of Americans. But they also can quickly find themselves in a harsh spotlight when an administration policy comes under question.

With the issue of migrant children separated from their families dominating headlines, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar was so determined to get a better handle on the 12,000 migrant children under his department’s care that he was up until 1 a.m. one night last week personally poring through cases in the operations center of the bunker-like HHS building at the foot of Capitol Hill.

The Cabinet members are lashed to a mercurial president who has been known to quickly sour on those working for him and who doesn’t shy from subjecting subordinates — many of them formerly powerful figures in their own rights — to withering public humiliation. Think Attorney General Jeff Sessions, a former senator whom Trump early on labeled “beleaguered” by presidential tweet and who has since been repeatedly subjected to public criticism.

Trump’s Cabinet, a collection of corporate heavyweights, decorated generals and influential conservatives, has been beset by regular bouts of turnover and scandal. A Cabinet member’s standing with Trump — who’s up, who’s down; who’s relevant, who’s not — is closely tied to how that person or their issue is playing in the press, especially on cable TV.

Over the last 16 months, that dynamic has resulted in a Cabinet with varying tiers of influence with the president. Though all 24 Cabinet members, including the vice president, can have the president’s ear at times, some have been able to consistently influence Trump behind the scenes and mostly retained his respect. Others have fended off — so far — a swarm of accusations of ethical violations and moved steadily forward enacting the president’s agenda. A third group has largely flown under the radar, their names out of the headlines and their jobs seemingly secure.

Trump, like many modern presidents, has consolidated power in the West Wing and largely judges his Cabinet members by how well they reflect upon him, according to nearly two dozen administration officials, outside advisers and lawmakers. Most of those interviewed for this account

spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk publicly about private discussions.

THE POWERFUL

One key measure of the effectiveness of Cabinet members has been their ability to manage up to the president — and manage their disappointment when he ignores their counsel.

Mike Pompeo, first as Trump’s CIA director and now as his secretary of state, has seemingly cracked that code.

During a classified briefing on economic assistance for one African nation, the then-CIA director whipped out an annotated map, pointing out where U.S. troops were located and showing how aid contributed to their counter-terrorism mission. One official in the room said Pompeo presented the map as though he had worked it up the night before, rather than as something produced by his teams of analysts, earning brownie points and a sympathetic response from the president.

Pompeo’s stock with the president ran deep as an early supporter. But as CIA director, he worked with the national security team to try to steer the unconventional president toward more conventional approaches. Their personal relationship grew as Pompeo attended nearly every presidential daily intelligence briefing he could — always bringing visual aids.

His predecessor as secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, never clicked with the president and often voiced his objections in a passive-aggressive manner that infuriated the president, delivering retorts like “if you say so” and “you know best, sir,” according to the official. Tillerson was fired in March, months after word leaked that he had reportedly privately referred to Trump as “a moron.”

Other officials have also remained in close orbit around Trump, in part by lavishing frequent praise on the president both publicly and privately. Trump has remained fond of hard-charging Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, praising his combative briefings with the press. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and Ross, despite his mocked TV appearance, also have largely remained in Trump’s good graces. The president attended Mnuchin’s Washington wedding last year and the treasury secretary has become a regular on the Sunday talk shows.

Administration officials believe the Cabinet member who has been most successful in managing Trump has been Mattis. The retired Marine general, thought of as a warrior monk for his academic mindset, is soft-spoken in his interactions with the president — often passing up the chance to speak in meetings — but his advice carries outsized weight.

Mattis is a frequent guest at White House lunches and dinners, a sign of his elevated status. He frames his suggestions to the president in terms of his expertise, and when Trump is leaning in a different direction calmly makes

his case. White House officials have noticed that Trump sometimes later repeats historical military anecdotes that Mattis related to him — evidence the president was really listening.

But even Mattis has seen his influence wane in recent weeks — he opposed the Space Force plan before Trump announced it — as the president has grown less tolerant of dissenting viewpoints in the Oval Office.

THE EMBATTLED

Winding down a presidential monologue extolling the EPA for rolling back regulations and shrinking staff, Trump turned to Pruitt across the Oval Office to discuss one other matter.

“Knock it off,” Trump said at the end of the April meeting.

With that terse yet mild reprimand, Pruitt retained his job despite the long run of bad headlines he’s generated for a series of questionable ethical moves. The incidents number more than a dozen, including renting a lobbyist’s Capitol Hill home at below-market rate, spending millions on security and travel, and using government staff to try to get his wife a fast-food chicken franchise.

Congressional Democrats, some influential Republicans and even much of the West Wing, including chief of staff John Kelly, have urged Trump to fire Pruitt. But the president so far has refused, believing that Pruitt’s effectiveness on the job outweighs his personal transgressions.

For now.

Pruitt is far from alone in drawing scrutiny for possible ethical violations. Ryan Zinke, the interior secretary, was accused of spending tens of thousands of dollars on office renovations and private flights. David Shulkin was fired from his post as veterans affairs secretary amid a mutiny from his own staff after an internal review found ethics violations related to his trip to Europe with his wife last summer.

Trump berated his first health and human services secretary, Tom Price, for a series of misstatements last year that the president felt was complicating the administration’s push to repeal President Barack Obama’s health care law, according to a former administration official. Price was later fired amid his own ethical scandal involving spending hundreds of thousands in taxpayer dollars on private travel.

All told, Trump has had more turnover of Cabinet-level positions than any president at this point in their tenure in the last 100 years.

But what has angered Trump more than the substance of the scandals are the bad images they produced, according to four White House officials and outside advisers. The president has complained to confidants that more members of his Cabinet “weren’t good on TV.” He fumed to one ally in the spring, at the height of the ethical questions surrounding Pruitt, Zinke and Housing and Urban Development head Ben

Carson, that he was only seeing his Cabinet on TV for scandals and not for fulfilling campaign promises.

Trump has also complained that he wants to see more of them on cable television defending his administration and showcasing his accomplishments. In recent months, the White House has pushed Cabinet members to make more public shows of support: They were encouraged to tweet about Trump’s 500th day in office; were asked to stop by an opioid exhibit on the Mall; and were urged to show up at the annual congressional baseball game.

Zinke may have gone a bit overboard. He showcased his support for Trump by tweeting out a photo of himself in late June wearing socks with Trump’s face and the slogan “Make America Great Again.” He later deleted it after outside groups complained he was violating federal law by endorsing a political slogan.

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, for her part, had an angry exchange with protesters outside a Washington restaurant while defending her husband — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell — and the president’s policy of separating migrant families at the border.

“Why don’t you leave my husband alone?” she demanded.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders plays down reports of tension between Trump and his Cabinet, saying the president typically talks to at least one member a day and now has a better sense of “what he wants and what his expectations are” from them.

“The president likes to engage,” Sanders said. “He likes to talk to his team. He likes to get their feedback. He likes to throw out ideas.”

THE QUIET ONES

Every Wednesday morning at 7 a.m., up to a dozen Cabinet members leave their staffs behind and quietly gather, often at the mammoth Department of Agriculture building just south of the National Mall.

There, they dive into Bible study. Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and Carson are among the regular attendees, and at times they are joined by Vice President Mike Pence and others.

The members rarely speak about the sessions, reflecting the low-key, keep-their-heads-down approach most have taken to their positions. Some have had boomlets of bad press — Carson over a \$31,000 dining set ordered for his office, DeVos for a disastrous television interview in which she had trouble with basic facts about her department — but they have mostly avoided the devastating headlines and cable chyrons generated by the likes of Pruitt and Price.

Perry has told allies that he wants to stay in his lane and build relationships on Capitol Hill while frequently turning up in the West Wing — including popping up at key events, like Pompeo’s swearing-in — to get valuable face time with

the president. The former Texas governor, who turned down a chance to succeed Shulkin at the VA, has taken pride in his lower profile, joking about how he doesn't get bad press like some of his colleagues.

While many of the Cabinet members are collegial, there have been moments of strain between agencies. During the onslaught of heartbreaking images from the border as migrant families were separated, a quiet turf battle emerged among the Justice, Homeland Security and Health and Human Services departments. Homeland Security head Kirstjen Nielsen, who had been on shaky ground with Trump for an increase of border crossings, later became the public face of the policy and was heckled at a Mexican restaurant.

Trump likes to take Cabinet secretaries along with him on Air Force One trips — in part to defray the costs for the White House, according to a former administration official. Past administrations, including Obama's, used the same tactic.

The White House tries to hold Cabinet meetings every two weeks — the beginnings are open to the press — to foster better interaction, aides have said, but also to project the feel of a corporate boardroom with Trump presiding as America's CEO and overseeing the nation's business.

Those sessions, held more frequently than under Obama, have become a signature image of the Trump White House. Cabinet members, accomplished individuals in their own rights, take turns around a table praising the president in a manner reminiscent of "Dear Leader" sessions in authoritarian nations.

Chao in June 2017 said, "I want to thank you for getting this country moving again, and also working again." Price: "I can't thank you enough for the privilege that you've given me, and the leadership you've shown." Mnuchin: "It's been a great honor traveling with you around the country for the past year, and an even greater honor to be serving you on your Cabinet."

Trump returned the favor last month at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, turning a meeting on the upcoming hurricane season into a storm of compliments.

—To Chao: "All you do is produce. You do it in a very quiet way and so effective and so incredible."

—To Azar: "Alex, I'm very proud of what you've done. We're going to have a great health care bill planned."

—To Carson: "What you're doing is great, Ben. That's really inspirational. More than just brick and mortar."

On it went, as Trump went around the room to shower all of the present Cabinet members with praise. All but one, that is.

"Thank you, Jeff. Thank you very much," is all Trump said to his attorney general.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

About a half-dozen members of Trump's inner circle, including then-chief of staff Reince Priebus, then-chief

strategist Steve Bannon and senior adviser Jared Kushner, were hurriedly summoned to the Oval Office on a chilly Friday afternoon in March 2017. Once they were inside, Trump erupted.

The day before, Sessions had announced his recusal from the Russia probe, blindsiding the president. Trump screamed at the staffers, according to one person with direct knowledge of the conversation, demanding to know how Sessions could be so "disloyal" while musing that he should fire the attorney general, who had been one of his earliest and most loyal supporters.

From that moment forward, Sessions became a singular figure in Trump's Cabinet. No Cabinet member in recent memory has been the target of so many broadsides from his own boss yet has still managed to hang onto his job.

In an onslaught of tweets and interviews, Trump has tormented Sessions publicly, while in private often refusing even to speak his name, sometimes just referring to him simply as "one of my attorneys." He unloads to confidants whenever Sessions appears on the TV in his private West Wing kitchen or his office on Air Force One. And he has accused the Justice Department of conspiring against him.

But to his deep frustration, Trump has been restrained from firing Sessions, for at least as long as special counsel Robert Mueller's probe continues. The attorney general has support from conservatives and Republican senators, and Trump's confidants, including attorney Rudy Giuliani, believe that dismissing Sessions would upend the special counsel's investigation.

Sessions, for his part, has largely been silent in the face of Trump's attacks, his defense limited to a statement defending the department's "integrity and honor" and a highly visible dinner with his two top lieutenants in February that was interpreted by some as a sign of a solidarity pact in case the president moved to fire one, or all, of them.

The attorney general has told allies that the post is his dream job and he aims to keep pushing his agenda, including a hawkish immigration stance, even if it means coming under fire from the White House. Earlier this year, to mark the one-year anniversary of his confirmation, his senior aides gave him a gift: a bulletproof vest emblazoned with his name.

Associated Press writers Darlene Superville, Ken Thomas, Jill Colvin, Sadie Gurman, Juliet Linderman, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar and Matthew Daly contributed reporting.

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3,000 Migrant Children Remain Separated From Parents; 100 Are Under Age 5

By Caitlin Dickerson

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

Five days before the first government-imposed deadline to reunite migrant parents and children who were separated after crossing the Southwest border, immigration authorities are mounting a round-the-clock effort involving hundreds of federal workers to bring the families together, a senior Trump administration official said Thursday.

Alex Azar, the secretary of Health and Human Services, said that nearly 3,000 separated children remained in the government's care, about 100 of whom were under 5 years of age. The youngest children must be reunited with a parent by Tuesday under a deadline imposed by a federal judge in San Diego. Older children must be returned to their parents by July 26 under the court's injunction.

Mr. Azar said that the agency would meet its deadline but, echoing President Trump's earlier analysis, he blamed Congress and the courts for any delay in reversing one of the harshest impacts of the president's new "zero-tolerance" policy on border enforcement.

"Any confusion is due to a broken immigration system and court orders. It's not here," Mr. Azar said in a conference call.

Judge Dana M. Sabraw of the Federal District Court in San Diego last week issued the preliminary injunction, which also required that all children must be allowed to at least talk to their parents by Friday.

"The unfortunate reality is that under the present system, migrant children are not accounted for with the same efficiency and accuracy as property," the judge wrote.

Mr. Azar said the agency was using DNA tests to confirm that the parent and child relationships were genuine. He added that parents of the youngest children, for whom the earliest deadline applies, have already been moved to immigration jails that were close to the shelters where their children were being held.

The Department of Health and Human Services "knows the identity and location of every minor in the care of our grantees and H.H.S. is executing on our mission even with the constraints handed down by the courts," he said.

Part of the delay is the care that the authorities must take in making sure that those claiming the detained children are genuinely their parents, Mr. Azar said. He said the agency is also attempting to verify that parents do not have a background that make them inappropriate caretakers.

Another complicating factor, he said, is that some children being held by immigration authorities may not qualify for immediate reunification under the court's order because they became separated from their parents during their journey and not by border agents after their entry into the United States.

"It's important to remember that information from children can at times be unreliable," Mr. Azar said.

Trump Administration Says It Is Working To Reunite Families By Court Deadline

Health and human services secretary blames 'broken immigration system and court orders' for confusion

By Louise Radnofsky And Arian Campo-Flores

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Donald Trump Has No Answers For The Border Crisis. And Things Are About To Get Worse.

By Chris Cillizza, Cnn Editor-At-Large

[CNN](#), July 5, 2018

(CNN)Although the family separation crisis at the nation's southern border has slipped off the front pages, the crisis remains: There are still more than 2,000 children still separated from their parents.

We think. Why don't we know the exact number? Because the US government continues to refuse to release any sorts of figures on how many children have been reunited with their parents.

In fact, after using the 2,000 figure for days, the Department of Health and Human Services now estimates it could be closer to 3,000.

How is President Donald Trump dealing with that crisis? By tweeting, of course.

Trump unleashed a trio of tweets Thursday morning – all dealing with immigration.

"Congress must pass smart, fast and reasonable Immigration Laws now," he tweeted. "Law Enforcement at the Border is doing a great job, but the laws they are forced to work with are insane. When people, with or without children, enter our Country, they must be told to leave without our Country being forced to endure a long and costly trial. Tell the people 'OUT,' and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn. Hiring thousands of 'judges' does not work and is not acceptable – only Country in the World that does this!"

For good measure, Trump added: "Congress – FIX OUR INSANE IMMIGRATION LAWS NOW!"

What you may have noticed in Trump's tweets is that there is a) no mention of the children already separated from their parents due to the Trump administration's "zero-tolerance" policy and b) no clear directive to Congress about any sort of comprehensive immigration reform proposal aside from "FIX OUR INSANE IMMIGRATION LAWS NOW," which is, um, sort of non-specific.

What's remarkable about the lack of action – or even a plan of action – is that time is running out. Here are a few of

the upcoming deadlines as set by a federal judge in California last week:

By Friday, the Trump administration is supposed to have guaranteed that every child separated from a parent as a result of the “zero-tolerance” policy at the border is in touch with their parents

By July 10, all children 5 and under have to be reunited with their parents (there are estimated to be around 100 of those kids)

By July 26, all children separated from their parents at the border have to be reunited

July 26 is three weeks from today. While it's possible that the Trump administration is, behind the scenes and without releasing any information on what they are doing, rapidly reuniting families, it's much more likely that isn't happening – or at least at nothing close to the rate that would allow the government to reunite all kids and parents by the end of the month. On Thursday afternoon, HHS said it plans to meet the deadlines set by the California judge, although that might mean sending separated kids into detention facilities with their parents.

It's easy – amid the numbers game and the various timelines – to lose sight of something very, very important here: These are little kids we are talking about. Some younger than 5. As the father of two kids under age 10, I can't even imagine the terror these kids – and their parents – must be feeling. One time when my older son was 4, I couldn't find him in an outdoor mall for 10 minutes. I was absolutely panicked. So was he. That was 10 minutes. We are talking about days and week in some cases here.

This piece in the Los Angeles Times does a good job of capturing just how traumatic these separations have been. These lines in particular struck me:

“The words appear on a scrap of paper, scrawled in pencil by an immigrant mother held at a detention center: ‘We beg you to help us, return our children. Our children are very desperate. My son asks me to get him out and I’m powerless here.’

“In another letter, childish print on notebook paper, a mother spoke of her son: ‘It’s been a month since they snatched him away and there are moments when I can’t go on.... If they are going to deport me, let them do it — but with my child. Without him, I am not going to leave here.’

“At least 2,053 children were separated from their parents due to the Trump administration’s “zero tolerance” immigration policy. Officials have said they reunited 538 of those children, but didn’t intend to reunite them with parents who were detained. In more than a dozen letters collected by volunteers, detained mothers separated from their children shared their despair, pleaded to be released and sent messages of love to their children.”

On Thursday, HHS Secretary Alex Azar would not give a specific number of separated children in HHS custody

during a phone call with reporters. He said under 3,000 children currently in custody are being looked at as possibly separated minors and that approximately 100 children under the age of five in HHS custody may have been separated from their families.

What's even more striking is that Trump's solution to stop the family separations at the border – an executive order that allows children to be detained with their parents – is a stop-gap solution that is about to expire. Why? Because Trump's executive order did not override a Supreme Court decision from the early 1990s that says a child cannot be held in a detention facility for more than 20 days. Which means that on or around July 10 – 20 days from Trump's signing of the EO on June 20 – border enforcement officials will be required to start separating families currently being held in detention centers.

In short: The family separation crisis is likely to get worse – and soon.

What of Trump's call for Congress to act? Prior to leaving last week for a July 4 recess, two comprehensive immigration bills – one which was pushed by Trump and Republican leaders – failed miserably. Like, not even close to passage. And Congress won't return to Washington until next Monday – July 9 – giving them 24 hours before major deadlines on family reunification and family separation kick in.

Congress has been trying to pass comprehensive immigration reform in one form or another since 2005. It hasn't happened yet. Given that, it seems unlikely that a series of scolding tweets from the President will suddenly light the necessary fire under Congress to solve these problems.

Yes, we are witnessing a policy failure here – from the White House down through Congress. But, more than that, we are watching a humanitarian crisis play out – among the youngest of us. And, no matter how you feel about our border policies, that can't – and shouldn't – sit right with you.

CNN's Sonia Moghe contributed to this report.

A Day In The Life Of An Attorney At The Border

By Efrén Olivares

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

Mr. Olivares is a civil rights attorney.

In the Italian film “Life is Beautiful,” a Jewish bookstore owner uses creative stunts to distract his child from the horrible reality of being held in a Nazi concentration camp. I was reminded of that movie recently, as I found myself part of an eerily similar heartbreaking moment.

As lawyers with the Texas Civil Rights Project, my team has been working around the clock to document hundreds of cases of children taken from their parents since the Trump administration launched its “zero tolerance” immigration

policy. Under that policy, the government charges every immigrant apprehended at the border with illegal entry, a misdemeanor offense — regardless of whether they're fleeing violence and seeking asylum, or traveling with children. Before zero tolerance, immigration and Department of Justice officials exercised their discretion on whether to press criminal charges against some immigrants and asylum seekers, particularly those traveling with children or those with special circumstances.

Each morning for the last three weeks, my colleagues and I have gone to the federal courthouse in McAllen, Texas, seven miles from the Mexican border. We arrive no later than 7:45 a.m., pass the metal detectors at the security check, and make sure to get to the eighth floor by 8:00.

By that time, the courtroom is already nearly full. On a typical morning, some 70 to 80 men and women are brought to court and put in handcuffs with shackles around their ankles. The vast majority are first-time border crossers. A public defender asks the group whether any are traveling with children and have been separated from them. Struggling with the handcuffs, it's not easy for them to raise their hands. Sometimes, to answer in the affirmative, they must stand up.

The criminal proceeding begins at 9 a.m., and depending on how many separated parents are there each day, we have maybe five to seven minutes to speak with each parent beforehand. Hopefully, that's enough to get the most basic information about them and the children taken from them — names, dates of birth, country of origin. They're frightened and confused, and most don't speak English. I tell them in Spanish that I'm a lawyer working on family separations and that I can try to help get their children back.

The parents ask when they're going to see their children again. I try to calm them and tell them I'll do my best to make sure it happens soon. The truth is I don't have an answer. And I can't make a promise I'm not sure I can keep.

The stories they tell are all devastating. But as a father, I was really hit in the gut by one a few weeks back.

I was talking with a single father whose wife left him several years ago when his daughter was three years old. They were fleeing violence in Honduras in search of a better life. But it didn't work out that way. Once they crossed the border, the United States charged him with a crime, and agents told him they had to take his daughter away.

As they were leaving, his daughter asked where she was going. What can a father possibly tell his daughter in that situation?

Like the character in "Life is Beautiful," this dad's priority was to try to shield his little girl from pain. So he made up a story: He told her she was going to summer camp.

The girl, only seven years old and oblivious to her plight, walked away with a big smile. She was so excited for her first day of camp.

I've encountered so many awful stories like this that I've become desensitized. I almost see them as normal.

The first time a crying parent asked me when she would see her son again, I struggled to find an answer. But many weeks after the Trump administration started its zero tolerance policy — and hundreds of separated families later — I've become hardened to these conversations because I've had them over and over, day after day.

Plus, there's no time for those feelings in the courtroom. We have to get as much information as we can, and it's a race against the clock. If we don't quickly complete the intake and interview process to later track them down, no one except the government will know that a separation occurred. And without the information about these children and their parents, how will we look for them? How will anyone?

Of 381 families we interviewed, 278 are still separated. At least two children have been deported without their parents. And at least five parents have been deported without their children, who remain in the United States. This is only a fraction of the more than 2,000 families that remain separated today.

Parents seeking asylum and safety for their families need meaningful access to attorneys and the courts. They shouldn't be forced into a Hobson's choice between seeing their children again or pursuing their asylum claim. Some of the parents we've interviewed tell us these illegal pressures from the government are increasing.

The way to end this nightmare is to rescind the zero tolerance policy that criminalizes immigrants and asylum seekers. The solution is not to detain these families indefinitely as the government currently plans. Rather, immigrants and asylum seekers should be allowed to pursue their cases in immigration court without being detained, as was done under the Family Case Management Program, which was highly successful in terms of people appearing for their court hearings, which this administration terminated.

In effect, the administration can end this crisis with the stroke of a pen today. Until then, my colleagues and I will be in the courthouse bright and early tomorrow morning, and each one thereafter.

Dozens of frightened immigrants and a courtroom full of heartbreaking stories will be waiting for us at 8:00.

Efrén Olivares is the Racial Economic Justice Program director at the Texas Civil Rights Project.

Trump Politicized Children. Democrats Should Empower Them.

By Mark Schmitt

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

In the 1990s, kid-centered politics was successful, if not transformational. It can offer the beginnings of an agenda for progressive renewal.

Mr. Schmitt is the director of the political reform program at the research organization New America.

For years, I've held onto a memo that a professional mentor gave me around 1990, a typewritten document by the pollster Stanley Greenberg with the title "Kids as Politics." Mr. Greenberg, who has shown the sharpest understanding of traditionally Democratic voters drawn to the appeal of Ronald Reagan then or Donald Trump today, argued that a political agenda centered on children could not only improve kids' lives but also open the door to a broader liberalism and to Democrats more generally; kid-centered politics would help Americans "rediscover government."

Politics centered on children went beyond a few federal programs. "When candidates talk about kids," Mr. Greenberg wrote, "they are talking about the fundamental economic and social terrain on which Democrats must run."

Mr. Greenberg's memo, now more than 30 years old, is strikingly relevant to the current moment. The practice of separating children from their parents at the border galvanized a level of outrage, including among prominent Republicans, that exceeds even the protests spurred by Mr. Trump's travel ban early in his term. As part of Mr. Trump's move to chip away at the enormous federal deficit by cutting money already allocated by Congress — the "rescissions" battle — he has proposed slashing support for the Children's Health Insurance Program, one of the most consistently popular federal programs since its creation in 1997.

Whether Democrats choose the path or not, children are likely to be at the center of political fights in 2018 and beyond.

In the Reagan era, the idea of a political vision centered on children influenced many Democrats and some Republicans, including conservatives. As Democratic governor of Arizona, Bruce Babbitt declared 1985 "The Year of the Child," earning mockery from *The Arizona Republic* for offering voters "quiche" rather than the "meat and potatoes" of Arizona politics, such as water rights and economic development. (A book called "Real Men Don't Eat Quiche" was popular in the mid-1980s.) A National Commission on Children was started, where liberals and social conservatives such as Kay Coles James, now president of the Heritage Foundation, found common ground on an ambitious agenda that included a child tax credit and the children's health program that Mr. Trump now proposes to cut. While the commission's 1991 recommendations were widely derided as overly ambitious, most of them were enacted within a few years.

Kid-centered politics, in its first phase, was quite successful — at least if judged by the standards of whether it helped create programs that improved life for children, established some basis for bipartisan consensus, and in a few cases gave politicians an issue to run on. CHIP funding, for example, was a winning issue for Democrats in both the

2006 and 2008 elections, and restoring funding for the children's health program was one of Barack Obama's first moves in the White House. Between 1980 and 2010, funding for children's programs more than tripled, in current dollars, according to the Urban Institute's annual "Kids' Share" report.

For all that success, children-centered politics alone didn't quite live up to Mr. Greenberg's promise of its transformational power. Kids didn't open the door to a broader recognition of the value of government. They don't force voters to confront the imbalances of power in the workplace and the larger economy that have led to stagnant or declining wages for the majority of working families. Those underlying conditions limit life chances for children, as well as for young adults and parents, in ways that government redistribution programs can't compensate for. Children can be carved out, as a kind of special vulnerable category, without challenging the underlying structures that lead to inequality.

A focus on children could even be, and was, compatible with the sort of business-friendly and Wall Street-friendly politics that Democrats adopted in the Clinton era — the very brand of politics many young Democrats are eager to relegate to the past. Democrats of the current era, including most of the prospective 2020 presidential candidates, are unlikely to be satisfied with a political language that focuses mainly on children. They're on to bigger ideas that get to the core of the economy and fairness, like a job guarantee or universal basic income. Even universal child care seems to have slipped from the agenda.

There's also a dangerous strain of kids-first politics, one that focuses on the relative benefits of programs for the elderly and disabled, Social Security and Medicare, compared with those for kids. That makes sense if the only resources to increase benefits for kids could come from those programs rather than, for example, closing the tax loopholes for private equity.

But while kids-first politics has its pitfalls, sometimes history doesn't let us choose the agenda. Children being pulled away from or locked in a detention facility with their parents and programs that have vastly improved children's health being slashed aren't issues to ignore. They've galvanized voters past and present around substance rather than scandal in unmatched ways.

The role of women in the current Democratic revival is related to the new opportunity to put kids at the center of the agenda. Yet kids' politics is not limited to women. As men play a larger role in caregiving, kids are, as Mr. Greenberg promised, a universal value.

The success of "kids as politics" in the 1990s and the power of children as a political theme today can still offer the beginnings of an agenda for progressive renewal. The lesson to take from the previous round is that children don't automatically open the doors to a rediscovery of active government or a robust social safety net.

The challenge today is to take the next step, to show how protecting kids and giving them a sound start in life requires more than just government spending programs but a real reassessment of old assumptions about the economy and how all families can share in its benefits.

Mark Schmitt (@mschmitt9) is the director of the political reform program at the research organization New America.

4 Things We Don't Know About Family Reunifications

By Alan Gomez

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

The Trump administration is facing a series of deadlines imposed by a federal judge to reunify children who were separated from their parents along the southwest border.

By Tuesday, the administration must reunite about 100 children under the age of 5 being held by the Department of Health and Human Services. The department then has until July 26 to reunite the remaining minors in its custody, estimated to be nearly 3,000, with their parents.

The ruling issued by District Judge Dana Sabraw in San Diego was a relief for immigration advocates, but many questions remain over how the government is responding. Here's a look at some of the questions that remain unanswered: How many kids remain separated?

"Under 3,000" was the answer given by Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar during a conference call with reporters on Thursday.

That number has been in flux in recent weeks as the administration faced increasing pressure to end its "zero tolerance" policy, prompting President Donald Trump to sign an executive order on June 20 to end the practice of separating families.

In early June, U.S. Customs and Border Protection estimated that 2,342 children had been separated from their parents under the "zero tolerance" policy. On June 20, Azar said they had reunited several hundred families, leaving 2,053 children in HHS custody. On June 26, he said the number had fallen to 2,047.

But on Thursday, Azar said his department was forced to examine the cases of all 11,800 minors in its custody because the judge ordered all children to be reunited with their parents, including those separated before the "zero tolerance" policy went into full effect in May.

Most of the cases, he said, were minors who crossed the border on their own. But he said fewer than 3,000 may have been separated, leading to the higher estimate. About 100 of them are under age 5, Azar said. Where will they be reunited?

Currently, minors are being housed in privately run shelters around the country that are under contract with

Health and Human Services. Their parents are being held in detention centers run by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and federal prisons administered by the Bureau of Prisons.

Adults can't be transferred to the shelters for minors, and minors can't be transferred to federal prisons or most ICE detention facilities.

The end result is a challenging few weeks ahead for the government to figure out a practical, and legal, middle ground.

One option is placing families in detention centers that meet legal requirements to hold adults and children together. The Department of Homeland Security currently runs three such facilities — two in Texas, one in Pennsylvania — that contain about 3,300 beds, but those are already at or near capacity.

That has prompted the Trump administration to find alternatives. The Department of Defense has offered to open up 12,000 beds at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, but lawyers say it would be nearly impossible to install all the staff, medical equipment, educational equipment, and other legal requirements for family detention centers in time to meet the judge's deadline.

The Department of Justice is trying to argue that the government can hold immigrant families together indefinitely, despite a series of court rulings and U.S. laws that dictate most children must be released from immigration detention within 20 days. Justice could also drop its demands that parents remain in immigration detention, allowing them to be released into the U.S. as they await their deportation hearing before an immigration judge. What if a parent gets deported?

Immigration and Customs Enforcement has been offering a choice to parents facing deportation: get deported with your child, or get deported alone and leave your child in the U.S.

ICE spokeswoman Jennifer Elzea said it's a "long-standing policy" to make such an offer to parents facing deportation. In the past, she said parents frequently decided to return to their home country and leave their child behind. In practice, that means the child ends up with another relative already in the U.S., or HHS finds somewhere for the child to live.

Elzea said that option is presented only to parents who have been given a final order of removal, not those who are applying for asylum.

It remains unclear what will happen to parents seeking asylum whose children have been taken. That kind of case started the lawsuit that led to Judge Sabraw's ruling, and that parent has been reunited with her child. But immigration attorneys say many others remain separated and unsure what will happen. Can the government meet its deadlines?

Azar says "yes."

Tuesday's deadline to reunite all children under age 5 with their parents should be doable because there are only about 100 children that young in HHS custody. The bigger challenge will be reuniting all of the nearly 3,000 children with their parents before the end of the month.

Thousands of migrants are spread out in facilities around the country run by three different government agencies, leading to a "logistical nightmare," according to John Sandweg, a former acting director of ICE under President Barack Obama. And with ICE's three family-detention facilities already at or near capacity, the administration may be forced to release many families into the U.S. to await their court hearings.

HHS has reassigned 230 employees to focus on the reunification process. And ICE is already pre-positioning adults at facilities closer to their children, Azar said. In the end, he said, the government remains opposed to the judge's order, but will follow through on his demands.

"We will comply by the artificial deadlines established by the courts," he said.

Nearly 3,000 Separated Immigrant Children Remain In U.S. Custody: Officials

By Elisha Brown

[Daily Beast](#), July 5, 2018

Nearly 3,000 immigrant children who may have been separated from their parents at the U.S. border remain in government custody, including roughly 100 kids who are under the age of 5, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said Thursday.

That higher figure was announced after Azar told Congress last week that 2,047 immigrant children were in the government's care as a result of family separations under the Trump administration's heavily criticized "zero-tolerance" policy.

In a call with reporters on Thursday, Azar said the "under 3,000" figure was determined after a recent ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Dana Sabraw that ordered the reunification of all children under the age of 5 with their parents by July 10. That number may include children who told case workers they were traveling with a parent, but were actually separated from them before reaching the U.S. border, something the agency is working to determine, he added.

"It's important to remember that information from children can at times be unreliable," Azar said.

He insisted HSS will comply with the district court ruling, while adding that it "hinders" the agency's ability to verify parentage.

"To speed the process, [the Department of Homeland Security] is relocating parents of children age zero to four to facilities that are extremely close to facilities that are in [Office

of Refugee Resettlement] care to quickly reunite them," Azar said.

The secretary confirmed earlier reports that the government is DNA testing parents and children to "quickly and accurately" put families back together. Immigration advocates warn the biological data collection could lead to the surveillance of immigrant children for years to come.

"This is a further demonstration of administration's incompetence and admission of guilt, this further drives home the point we've been saying. They never registered parents and children properly," RAICES communications director Jennifer Falcon told CNN.

The government has until next Tuesday to reunite young children with their parents. HHS must also reunite children ages five and up with their families by July 26, per the district court ruling. After reunification, the parent and child will be transferred back into the custody of DHS, according to Azar.

HHS Now Estimates Under 3,000 Kids Separated From Parents In Government Custody

By Clare Foran

[CNN](#), July 5, 2018

Washington (CNN)Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar now estimates that under 3,000 kids who may have been separated from their parents are in government custody – a figure far higher than his department released just nine days ago.

HHS had previously reported that it had 2,047 children from separated families in its care.

During a call with reporters, Azar said "a review and comprehensive audit of multiple data sets" undertaken by HHS and the Department of Homeland Security "has identified under 3,000 children in total, including approximately 100 children under the age of 5," who he said are in the care of Office of Refugee Resettlement-funded grantees. The HHS secretary said that number refers to children "who may have been separated from their purported parents who were taken into DHS custody for having crossed illegally or for other reasons like concerns for the safety of the child."

President Donald Trump reversed course last month and signed an executive order intended to keep families together, but the administration is still facing scrutiny and questions over the families separated as a result of its widely-criticized "zero-tolerance" immigration policy.

The administration is now grappling with a series of court-imposed deadlines after a judge ordered the US government to halt most family separations at the border and the reunification of separated families.

DNA testing is being used as part of the effort to reunite children who were separated from their parents, a federal official with knowledge of the reunifications previously told CNN.

CNN's Catherine Shoichet, Sonia Moghe, Sunlen Serfaty and Laura Jarrett contributed to this report.

As First Family Reunification Deadline Arrives, Migrant Parents Still Struggle To Contact Their Kids

By Emanuella Grinberg And Nick Valencia

[CNN](#), July 5, 2018

Los Fresnos, Texas (CNN)The government agency tasked with reuniting child migrants with the parents they were separated from, or placing them with an appropriate sponsor, is coming up on an important deadline.

By July 6, officials must make sure every separated parent has a way to contact their child, US District Judge Dana Sabraw said in a June ruling.

It's the first in a series of deadlines Sabraw set for reuniting migrant families separated at the US-Mexico border as a result of the Trump administration's zero tolerance approach to immigration enforcement. Per Sabraw's order, by July 10, officials must reunify all parents with their children under the age of 5. The deadline for reunifying parents with children 5 and older is July 26.

In a phone call with reporters on Thursday, Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar cited two priorities for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, the agency tasked with family reunification:

- Generate accurate information to ensure children know the location of their parents
- Ensure parents and children are in communication twice a week

But for many of those parents, one phone call is not enough, and a second one seems like a distant hope. Making contact does not necessarily bring clarity to a family's situation, lawyers say. Sometimes, it can add to the confusion and deepen a parent's despair.

The government separated immigrant families. But officials still won't say exactly how many kids are in custody

Six lawyers working with dozens of detained parents have told CNN their clients had at least one phone call with their children. Most times, those phone calls last less than five minutes, said human rights lawyer Sara E. Dill, who is working with detained parents at Port Isabel Service Detention Center in Los Fresnos, Texas.

"And the detention centers aren't really helping to facilitate those calls," she said.

One detained mother says she had to wait more than two agonizing weeks before she received news of her 7-year-old son or spoke to him.

And she's still waiting for her second phone call, she said.

"I'm desperate. I want to know how my child is, I want to talk to him," Ada, a woman from Honduras, told CNN by phone from Port Isabel.

Her desperation is evident in her voice. She sobs and chokes on her words. They fled threats of deadly violence at home to seek asylum in the United States, her lawyer, Eileen Blessinger, said. Then one day she went to court, and when she returned he was gone, despite promises from guards that he was not going anywhere, Blessinger said.

Ada has tried to reach him before through a letter. She told him that she loves him, God will protect him, and they will be together soon.

She was told that she would receive two phone calls per week from him, she said. Per guidelines from HHS' Office of Refugee Resettlement, which oversees placement and care of unaccompanied minors in their custody, unaccompanied alien children must be given the opportunity to make a minimum of two telephone calls per week lasting 10 minutes each to family members or sponsors in a private setting.

Making and receiving phone calls isn't necessarily the hard part, as CNN's efforts to reach her show. The hard part is locating the children and coordinating those phone calls, lawyers told CNN.

She said she knows he's in a home and not a detention center, but nothing more about his whereabouts. She has called the numbers she's been told to call, but no one calls back, she said. All she can do is wait.

"They told us that they will give us two calls per week. But look, since last Friday I am waiting," she said, crying. "I need to talk to him to see what happened to him."

CNN's Nick Valencia reported from Texas and Emanuella Grinberg wrote from Atlanta. William Hernandez, Justin Gamble, Miguel Marquez and Jamiel Lynch contributed to this report.

Deadline To Reunite Immigrant Families Rapidly Approaching

By Colleen Long

[Associated Press](#), July 6, 2018

WASHINGTON (AP) — This spring, the Trump administration began a "zero tolerance" policy to criminally prosecute anyone caught crossing the border illegally. Because children can't be in jail with their parents, more than 2,300 families caught by Border Patrol were separated. The move prompted mass outrage in the United States and internationally. After first blaming the practice on the Democrats, Trump on June 20 signed an executive order that stopped the separation of families. A June 26 court order by a

federal judge set a hard deadline to reunite the families, and that deadline is fast approaching.

Here's where things stand:

THE NUMBERS

It's still not clear how many children have been separated from families under the zero-tolerance policy, or how many remain separated. Trump administration officials have said 2,342 children were separated from 2,206 parents from May 5 through June 9. Trump's order stopped separations on June 20.

About 520 children were reunited with their families within days because the improper-entry prosecutions were finished before the minors were turned over to the custody of Health and Human Services, which is responsible for caring for unaccompanied children. HHS Secretary Alex Azar told a congressional committee on June 26 there were 2,047 such children in his agency's care.

On Thursday, he said there are somewhere "under 3,000" children who were believed to have been separated, but that includes kids who may have lost parents along the journey, not just parents who were detained at the border. He said none had been transferred to Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody yet.

REUNITING FAMILIES

A federal judge in San Diego who had been hearing the case of a woman separated from her child ruled on June 26 that the families must be reunited within 30 days of his order, and by July 10 if the children are younger than 5.

But it's still not clear yet how that will work. Homeland Security has set up a staging area at the Port Isabel detention center in Texas where the parents can be detained until their children arrive. But it's not clear where they will go afterward — the three operational family detention centers are near capacity.

It's also possible not all parents will be reunited with their children; HHS has a strict set of guidelines the agency must follow to determine a suitable sponsor, including a home visit and a criminal background check.

Health and Human Services deployed more than 200 workers to review the cases of separated children. Azar said parents and children are being swabbed for DNA to match paternity and checks are being done as rapidly as possible to make the court deadline. He suggested the children would be transferred to ICE custody at Port Isabel shortly before the deadline. But he signaled they'd ask a judge for more time.

Azar said about 100 of the separated children are younger than 5 and subject to the rapidly approaching July 10 deadline. Officials there say they know the locations of all the children — some were sent hundreds of miles away to shelters around the country operated by nonprofits that care for them until a parent or other sponsor is identified.

A court hearing was scheduled Friday.

FAMILY DETENTION

It's also unclear if the families, once reunited, will be detained together or released on bond to wait out their cases. Trump administration officials have signaled they want to detain families indefinitely if they cross the border illegally, regardless of whether they are claiming asylum, in part because they say the cases move much quicker. But a court agreement on how children are treated in immigration custody generally prevents the government from holding children in immigration detention longer than 20 days.

Justice Department officials have asked that the agreement, known as the Flores agreement, be modified to allow for longer detentions. Homeland Security requested up to 12,000 more beds for a family detention center at a military base, though it asked for 2,000 to be made available quickly and the rest on an as-needed basis.

The facilities would have to comply with the standards set by the agreement that governs how children are treated in custody, which include access to medical care, entertainment, counseling and air conditioning; though many who have been detained say the accommodations still feel like prison. Congress would have to approve funding to operate the facility.

ASYLUM

Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who oversees immigration courts, has narrowed the parameters for those seeking asylum, arguing that domestic violence or gang violence is not grounds to grant it — a blow to people arriving from Central American countries like El Salvador that have been ravaged by violent street gangs.

Despite the limits, Homeland Security officials say if someone comes to a port of entry legally and claims asylum, then they won't face criminal prosecution for improper entry. They generally aren't detained while their cases are heard. Administration officials say only about 20 percent of asylum claims are granted, though people often spend years exhausting appeals before they are deported.

Some asylum seekers have been turned away at border crossings. Administration officials said it was a temporary measure only to free up space in processing centers. They say that the migrants were told to come back and that it was not an effort to push them into illegally crossing between borders, where they would be more likely to be detained and face criminal prosecution.

ZERO TOLERANCE

Meanwhile, the zero-tolerance policy is continuing for those who illegally cross the border alone: About half of the illegal crossings are single adults.

The charge of improper entry is a misdemeanor and the practice is usually for those caught to plead guilty and be sentenced to time served, or a brief jail sentence.

Right now, adults who arrive with children are no longer being referred for prosecution because there is not enough space to detain families together. It's unclear if or whether families will again face criminal prosecution should space become available.

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HHS Says Hundreds More Migrant Kids May Have Been Separated Than Earlier Count

By Dan Diamond

[Politico](#), July 5, 2018

HHS Secretary Alex Azar on Thursday acknowledged the Trump administration may have separated hundreds more migrant children from their parents than previously estimated as lawmakers from both parties called for greater scrutiny of the border policy.

"Somewhere less than 3,000 [children] is the maximum," Azar told reporters on a conference call, adding that about 100 children are under age 5. "We are erring on the side of inclusion until we can rule any connection out."

In updates to reporters and Congress, HHS last month said that it had custody of about 2,000 migrant kids separated by the Trump administration, dating to the beginning of May. But the agency has been reviewing nearly 12,000 case files to comply with a court order to reunify families and ensure that it hasn't missed any children who were previously separated and would be covered under a federal judge's ruling.

Dozens of members of Congress have suggested that the Trump administration is not moving quickly to put migrant families back together. Reps. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) and Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) on Thursday called on Azar, DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and Attorney General Jeff Sessions to produce information about reunification efforts and asked for a briefing within the next two weeks.

Azar defended his agency's efforts and disputed reports that the Trump administration is struggling to reunify families, vowing that his agency "knows its mission [and] we're executing on that mission." For instance, the agency has deployed an "unprecedented" 230 personnel — including 100 additional case managers — to refugee facilities to help prepare families to be reunited, he said.

Azar also said the agency hasn't yet reunited children with parents who are in Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody — despite a court order that gave them just days to do so.

HHS is using DNA testing "to confirm parentage quickly and accurately" given the looming court order, Azar said. While immigration advocates have warned that using the technology would put the migrants' private information at risk, the DNA tests are necessary to safeguard the children, said Jonathan White, deputy director for children's programs at HHS' Office of Refugee Resettlement.

"We expect that the great majority of these parents are exactly who they claim to be ... but we have to protect children from people who would prey on them," White told reporters. "These DNA results are being used solely for that purpose and no other."

White said that HHS is using a qualified DNA testing contractor that sends DNA kits to the sites, where HHS or DHS personnel collect cheek swabs and send them back to the lab with "strict chain of custody." HHS personnel are only turning to DNA testing when reviewing a specific family relationship, officials said.

Azar also said he assigned three directives to his agency's emergency response team: generate accurate information, ensure communication between separated families and work to appropriately place children in custody with families or sponsors.

Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security is relocating parents of young children to facilities that are nearby in order to speed up reunification, Azar said.

The HHS secretary repeatedly blasted Congress for failing to act to change immigration laws and blamed some families for trying to illegally enter the United States.

"I want no children in our custody," Azar said. "We would rather them be with family members in our country or back home."

He also criticized "artificial deadlines created by the courts," which he said may force HHS to cut corners on vetting how migrant children should be reunited with families.

A federal judge ruled last week that the Trump administration had until July 10 to reunite migrant children under age 5 with their parents, and until July 26 to reunite the rest. However, HHS has struggled with implementing the order, with staffers at the Office of Refugee Resettlement saying that they have received no instructions on how to proceed.

"Any confusion is due to a broken immigration system and court orders," Azar told reporters. "It's not here."

Advocates disputed Azar's characterization, arguing that the administration is dealing with a problem of its own making.

"The Trump administration's attempt to shift the blame to the court is incomprehensible given how much time the court gave the government to fix its own mess," the ACLU's Lee Gelernt said in a statement. "When the government wants to marshal its resources to separate families, it has shown that it can do it quickly and efficiently."

As Many As 3,000 Migrant Families Separated At The Border Haven't Been Reunited

By Elise Foley

[Huffington Post](#), July 5, 2018

As many as 3,000 migrant children remain in government custody after being separated from their parents at the border, more than a week after a court ordered the Trump administration to reunite families, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said Thursday.

The Trump administration is currently in the process of reuniting families, in part by using DNA tests to confirm whether they are related. But the government has yet to return children to their parents in immigration custody, Azar said. He said the administration will meet the "extreme" and "arbitrary" deadline imposed by the court to reunite families.

That means the families split up under President Donald Trump are only being reunited if the parent agrees to deportation or if the child was released to another relative in the U.S.

The Trump administration began a zero tolerance policy earlier this year to prosecute as many illegal border crossings as possible. That has included detaining parents separately from their children while they undergo brief criminal proceedings.

About 100 children under the age of 5 have been identified as potentially separated from parents, out of a total of as many as 3,000 kids, Azar said. Some of those children were separated before Trump's zero tolerance policy began, or may have been split up from their parents when they were apprehended, he said. Government officials know where every child is and that they are being taken care of, Azar said.

Azar said the administration will use "every minute of every day" to confirm the parentage of children and to make sure they have a suitable caretaker. He said the court order limits the government's ability to do its typical screening process. He implied that quickly reuniting children with their parents could put them in danger, mentioning two instances of parents who were found to have criminal records including child cruelty, rape and kidnapping.

Azar blamed parents for the separations in the first place, repeatedly saying they should have gone to ports of entry or stayed home.

A federal judge ordered the Trump administration last week to reunite children separated from parents within 30 days, or within 14 days for those under age 5.

Trump and members of his administration have balked at the possibility of reuniting families in Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody. Under a separate court order, children cannot be detained for more than about 20 days. The administration is now fighting in court for the ability to indefinitely detain kids with their parents.

Azar said that order requires the government to "break families apart" after 20 days by releasing children from ICE custody.

But it doesn't require family separation. That's the case only if the government refuses to release parents with their children, as it has in the past. It's unclear if the Trump administration plans to split up families once again if it does not receive authority in court or through congressional action to indefinitely detain children with their parents.

U.S. Says It'll Return Immigrant Children Under 5 By Next Week

By Alexa N Green

[Bloomberg News](#), July 5, 2018

The U.S. will return immigrant children under five who were separated from their parents after crossing the Mexican border by July 10 to comply with a court order, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said Thursday.

The agency is analyzing the DNA of some children in its custody and adults who claim to be their parents to verify a family relationship, Azar said. He said the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is responsible for detaining and caring for undocumented immigrant children apprehended by authorities, is not sure precisely how many kids came into its care as a result of the Border Patrol taking them from their families.

The ORR program "was not designed to track the circumstances" behind a child's arrival in the U.S., Azar said, and the Department of Homeland Security didn't tell the refugee agency which children were taken from parents and which came over the border unaccompanied. The agency is now reviewing the cases of all 11,800 children in its custody to determine whether they were separated from caregivers.

Azar said fewer than 3,000 total were separated, and fewer than 100 under the age of five. DHS has located parents of the youngest children and moved them to detention centers closer to their kids so they can be reunited quickly after the refugee agency releases them. Public Uproar

The separations have become a political disaster for the Trump administration, roundly criticized by members of Congress in both parties amid public outrage. Border Patrol agents began taking immigrant children from their caregivers in the spring under the "zero tolerance" policy toward illegal border crossings that Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced in April.

Under the approach, parents and other caregivers apprehended after crossing the border were arrested and jailed, and the government placed their children with HHS. The administration is now exploring the construction of camps on military bases and new detention centers to house undocumented migrant families together.

On Thursday, a leading House Republican and Democrat teamed-up to request from Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen documents and other information about each child separated from their parents, including where they are being detained and for how long.

"We want to ensure that we can reunite children who have been separated from their families as expeditiously as possible," wrote Representative Mark Meadows, a North Carolina Republican, and Elijah Cummings, a Maryland Democrat.

Cummings, the top Democrat on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, and other Democrats on the panel requested the information on June 17, but say they've received no response. Meadows, a prominent Trump ally and chairman of the conservative Freedom Caucus who also is on the committee, agreed to join them. The joint letter also asks Nielsen for a briefing by July 19.

U.S. District Court Judge Dana Sabraw on June 26 ordered the Trump administration to return immigrant children younger than five to their parents within two weeks. Children five and older must be reunited within 30 days. He also ordered the government to provide for communications between detained caregivers and their children and not to deport adults without their kids.

Logistically, that's "not the easiest task," Azar said. He called it an "unprecedented situation in connecting parents and children."

Parents who were deported without their children likely asked that their kids remain in the U.S., Azar said. "Parents have a choice" when they're removed from the country to leave their children behind, he said.

— With assistance by Billy House

DNA Tests For Separated Families Slammed By Immigration Advocates

[NBC News](#), July 5, 2018

Immigration advocates on Thursday criticized the Trump administration's plan to conduct genetic testing on migrant children and parents separated as a result of its "zero tolerance" policy, saying the move is invasive and raises concerns over what the government might do with the biological data.

The federal government will be conducting the DNA tests — via a cheek swab — for every detained migrant child and then seeing if the DNA matches that of their purported parents, Cmdr. Jonathan White, assistant secretary for preparedness and response at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), said Thursday morning.

The move to collect DNA also raises serious concerns about consent for the children involved, said Jennifer Falcon,

communications director for the immigrants rights group RAICES.

"They're essentially solving one civil rights issue with another — it's a gross violation of human rights," she said. "These are minors with no legal guardian to be able to advice on their legal right, not to mention they're so young how can they consent to their personal information being used in this way?"

She added that the administration's fluctuating numbers on the number of separated children and the DNA testing showed "they did not do intake correctly and did not keep track of who they were separating."

She criticized the administration's reasoning that DNA tests were needed to quickly facilitate reunifications.

"They themselves have said they know where all the parents and children are so I think that's bogus," she said. "When people are detained they are fingerprinted already so why do they need DNA swabs if these people wen through the proper intake process when they were detained?"

While DNA tests have sometimes been used in the past to help determine biological relationships when identifying documents are not available, applying them to such a large number of families is new, noted César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, an associate professor at the University of Denver's Sturm College of Law who writes about criminal and immigration law.

"To apply it categorically to an entire population of people who have been separated by the government — that is a new addition to what the Trump administration is doing to immigration law enforcement," he said.

The government is reviewing cases of the under 3,000 children in its care who were separated from their parents, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said during a news teleconference.

García Hernández said that instead of the mass DNA testing, administration officials should add more human resources to facilitate determining parental relations.

"They need to put in as many resources to fix the problem as they did creating it," he said.

Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Immigrants' Rights Project, said in a statement to NBC News that the government should limit its use of such DNA tests and that the tactic raises issues of consent and privacy.

"We do not believe the government should be giving mandatory DNA tests in all reunification cases [but] should instead limit DNA tests to those cases where there is a genuine reason to doubt parentage, parentage cannot be established by any other means, and the parent agrees to the test," said Gelernt.

And, he added, "where DNA tests are appropriately used, the results should be expunged from government

records once reunification is accomplished, and not be used for any other purpose than reunification.”

Under the Obama administration, HHS officials warned that even requiring fingerprinting for sponsors could scare parents or other relatives who are in the country illegally away from claiming their children.

The HHS’ White said Thursday that because the administration was restricted by the reunification time frame ordered by a judge last week, the typical verification process of using identifying documents and working with consulates in a migrant’s home country would not be feasible.

Children under 5 must be reunited with their parents within 14 days after the judge’s order and children older than that within 30 days. That means the first deadline is Tuesday, July 10 — and the government said Thursday it has about 100 such young children in its facilities.

“Because of the compressed time frame, the typical process of using documentations is not going to be completed within the time frame allowed in this case by the court decision for the great majority of these children,” White said. “And for this reason the decision has been made to use the faster process of DNA verification to confirm that biological relationship.”

The administration has also said the DNA tests will help protect children from potential traffickers.

White said “the DNA results are being used solely for that purpose and no other,” but García Hernández said it remained unclear how long HHS would keep the DNA information and whether they would share it with other agencies — creating potential privacy concerns.

“There’s just no reason why anyone would assume they will not share it with” agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI or others, he said.

García Hernández added it was also unclear if other family members, such as aunts, uncles or cousins, who crossed the border illegally with children would be counted in the biological matches.

Because of the violence plaguing Central America, it is possible that some children were adopted and/or came with caretakers who were not their parents or even their biological relatives, he noted.

“There’s a lot of reasons why kids would have parents who would not have a biological relationship, especially in places that have been experiencing high degrees of violence for many, many years like Central America where families have been scattered by the gang violence that many individuals are now fleeing,” he said.

“So it would not at all be an unusual here for children being raised by people who are not biologically their parents or who may not be biologically related to them whether it was a formal adoption or not.”

DNA Tests On Separated Migrant Children Raise Privacy Issues

By Kristen V Brown

[Bloomberg News](#), July 5, 2018

The Trump administration’s decision to use DNA testing to help reunite children separated from their parents at the Mexican border is sparking concerns among privacy advocates about how data will be used.

The Department of Health and Human Services is analyzing the DNA of some of the nearly 3,000 separated children in U.S. custody, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said Thursday in a conference call with reporters. The agency is also testing adults who claim to be a child’s parent to verify familial relationships.

Typically, documents such as birth certificates are used to verify kinship claims, according to HHS. But DNA verification is being used instead to comply with a court order to reunite children up to age 4 with families by July 10, and children ages 5 to 17 by July 26.

“There’s just not a lot of oversight of what the government does with genetic data, even when we’re talking about U.S. citizens,” said Jordan Reimschisel, a research assistant at the Mercatus Center who has studied and written about genetic privacy. “We just don’t know what they could and will do with the data.”

Potential concerns raised by Reimschisel and other privacy advocates include government surveillance of migrant families, or using the health information gleaned from DNA tests to deny access to services in the future. There are also concerns that DNA samples from children won’t be obtained with proper consent. ‘Zero Tolerance’

In the aftermath of mass separations of families under the Trump administration’s zero-tolerance border policy, DNA testing companies including 23andMe Inc. and Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc. have offered their services to help match children to their families. The suggestion was supported by members of Congress including Representative Jackie Speier, a Democrat from California, as a potential method to quickly and accurately match kids with their families.

“DNA samples can be taken from all those in custody, with a commitment to respect their privacy, to ensure that these children are not made orphans by the American government,” Speier wrote in a statement on her Facebook page.

But Jennifer K. Wagner, the associate director of bioethics research at the Geisinger Institute, said that while there could be a responsible way to reunite families using DNA, key details like which genetic marker is being tested are lacking.

“There are so few details disclosed given all of the ethical and legal implications,” Wagner said. “It just sounds like this is hastily done.”

Wagner also stressed that there is risk in limiting familial relationships to those with a genetic relationship.

Once a relative has claimed a relationship to a child, health personnel with HHS and the Department of Homeland Security will collect cheek swabs from both children and parents and send it to a contracted lab to verify the relationship. Typically, the HHS said that DNA testing would be used as a last resort if documentation such as birth certificates weren't obtainable.

Jonathan White, deputy director for children's programs at the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is part of HHS, said the information will be used solely for the purpose of verifying relationships and that the data will remain in a strict chain of custody. He didn't specify whether the information would be destroyed after use in order to protect privacy of migrants, as some have called for.

"Genetic data can be used for a lot of things," Reimschisel said, pointing to the Golden State Killer case, in which police recently used a genealogy website to track down a long-sought killer. "It's a big question mark."

(
Updates with additional comment from Wagner in 10th paragraph. A previous version of this story misspelled Thermo Fisher.
)

No Children Reunited Yet From Border Separations

Feds cutting corners to meet 'extreme' court deadline for reunification

By Stephen Dinan

[Washington Times](#), July 5, 2018

The federal government will have to cut corners on safety checks in order to meet a federal judge's "extreme" deadlines to reunify families separated at the border, according to U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar.

None of the children separated have yet been reunited with their illegal immigrant parents still in government custody, Mr. Azar said Thursday, though he said they will meet the court's deadlines.

The 100 or so children under 5 years of age who were separated by government authorities must be reunited by Tuesday. As many as 2,900 other children between 5 and 17 years of age must be reunited by July 26.

The government has had to turn to DNA testing to confirm parents' relationship with the children, the government said. The goal is to weed out bogus claims by people who aren't related to the children but are trying to get a hold of them anyway.

DNA testing is faster than the usual process of birth certificates and other family documents, but even still, the

government won't be able to do all of the usual safety checks by the deadline.

"We will comply even if those deadlines prevent us from conducting our standard, or even a truncated vetting process," Mr. Azar told reporters.

Federal officials said the DNA is only being used for reunification, pushing back on fears of broader tracking or surveillance.

Mr. Azar said he's surged manpower to meet the court orders.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement, the division of Health and Human Services responsible for caring for Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC), has 11,800 in its dorms and shelters.

HHS officials have reviewed every single case to determine who might fall under the judge's order.

Most of the 11,800 are tradition UAC whose parents sent them to the border, or who came on their own, without any parent. But as many as 3,000 of them show some indication they may have been traveling with a parent and could be subject to the order for speedy reunification.

As the government does its checks, it's already come across two purported parents who according to background checks had child cruelty, rape or kidnapping histories that make them unsuitable to take custody of children, Mr. Azar said.

Those are the sorts of cases they're trying to avoid as they do the DNA and suitability checks — a process the secretary said the government is having to truncate to meet the judge's order.

"We have to protect children from people who would prey on them," he said.

While illegal immigrant children have dogged the government for years, dating back to the Obama administration, this latest go-around has been more pointed because some of it is a result of President Trump's get-tough policy on the border.

Part of that policy was the zero-tolerance approach to illegal immigrants, announced in early May, which saw Border Patrol agents refer — and prosecutors pursue cases on — nearly everyone caught jumping the border. They headed to jails for at least a few days.

Prosecutions have been pursued against illegal immigrants in previous administrations, but they were rarely used on families — a fact that became known among smugglers and migrants, who then began to bring their children in order to take advantage of the family "loophole."

However the Trump administration's decision to pursue charges led to children being separated from their parents because federal jails aren't able to accommodate families.

After a massive backlash the administration scuttled its plans and said it would no longer send parents to jail, but instead keep them in immigration detention. And that

effectively derailed the zero-tolerance policy, at least as it relates to families.

Still, the more than 2,000 children who were separated already are proving to be difficult for the administration to grapple with.

Mr. Azar said they usually try to release children to families already living in communities in the U.S. — often illegal immigrants themselves. He said releasing children back to parents who are still in immigration custody is new to HHS and is proving tricky to pull off with the speed ordered by the court.

DNA Testing Used To Reunite Undocumented Parents And Children, HHS Secretary Says

[CBS News](#), July 5, 2018

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said the government will meet court deadlines — with the help of DNA testing — to reunite children who were separated from their undocumented parents by immigration authorities. But reunited families may well remain in the custody of immigration authorities.

Azar told reporters on Thursday that officials have identified “under 3,000” children potentially separated from parents. He said DNA testing is being used to speed up matching parents and children.

About 100 of the children separated from their parents are under 5 years old, Azar said. A federal judge in California has ordered the youngest children reunited by Tuesday and the rest before the end of this month.

“HHS is continuing to work overtime to connect minors with verified parents within the constraints provided by the court,” Azar said.

The government has more than 230 people working to match children with their parents.

Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security said Thursday that in June, there were 18 percent fewer “apprehensions and inadmissibles” along the border compared to the previous month.

A look at what immigrant families are experiencing on the U.S. border amid the Trump administration’s “zero tolerance” policy

HHS Using DNA Tests To Match Separated Migrant Families

By Maya Rhodan

[TIME](#), July 5, 2018

Thousands of children who were separated from their parents at the U.S. border remain in federal custody, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said Thursday, one week after a federal court ordered the Trump Administration to quickly reunite the separated families. Now, in order to

reunify families, HHS is conducting DNA tests to verify family relationships.

Azar told reporters on a conference call on Thursday that “fewer than” 3,000 kids — including around 100 who are under age 5 — are being cared for in facilities funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is run out of HHS. There are more than 11,800 minors in their care — most of whom arrived at the border unaccompanied.

The Trump Administration is currently facing a tight deadline to reunite the families who were separated under their “zero tolerance” policy at the border. Last week, a federal judge ordered the Administration to return minors to their parents within 30 days. For children under 5, the timeline is even shorter — the deadline is Tuesday.

On Thursday, Azar said that in order to comply with that order the government is now conducting DNA tests to “confirm parentage quickly and accurately.” CNN first reported that the administration was conducting DNA tests on families in custody, which raised concerns among advocates and lawyers working with migrant families who have been separated.

As TIME reported on Monday, a person seeking to take custody of an unaccompanied minor in ORR care typically has to submit an application, pass a background check, provide documents to prove their identity, and provide proof of residence and financial viability. But Azar told reporters on Thursday that, in a number of ways, the department has had to “adapt” existing processes in order to meet “new demands and circumstances.” The tests are primarily being conducted via cheek swabs, officials said.

“Because of the compressed timeframe, the typical process of using documentations is not going to be completed within the timeframe allowed in this case by the court decision for the great majority of these children,” Commander Jonathan White, the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at HHS, told reporters on Thursday. “For this reason, the decision has been made to use the faster process of DNA verification to confirm that biological relationship.”

The use of DNA tests has stoked fury among advocates, who have expressed concern that the administration could use the data they collect from the DNA tests to track migrant families.

Jennifer Falcon, the communications director for the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services, or RAICES, called it the “grossest violation of human rights” and said the children in ORR custody are too young to consent to this kind of collection of their personal data.

“It’s deplorable they are using the guise of reuniting children to collect even more sensitive data about very young children,” Falcon said. “This would allow the government to conduct surveillance on these children for the rest of their lives.”

On the call with reporters, HHS' White pushed back on the idea that the government was arbitrarily collecting data and said the DNA tests were being conducted solely for the purpose of affirming the relationships parent-child relationships that are being asserted by individuals in custody.

Sophia Gregg, an attorney with the Legal Aid Justice Center, says that beyond it being "extremely intrusive" to take people's DNA, to her, the need for this kind of data collection suggests that the Administration was not prepared to reunite families after they'd been separated.

"It's very concerning from an advocate's perspective that there needs to be DNA testing because of a problem that they created themselves," Gregg said. "The fact that the U.S. government lost track of which child goes with which parent shows you the lack of competence that they have about this issue."

If and when children are released to adults who are currently in the custody of the Department of Homeland Security, it is not yet clear what will happen to them. The Trump Administration is currently seeking the legal authority to detain kids with their parents indefinitely. Under an existing legal settlement, children cannot be held in custody for longer than 20 days.

Parents Are Struggling To Reclaim Their Children From The Office Of Refugee Resettlement

By Jonathan Blitzer

[The New Yorker](#), July 5, 2018

Last week, after spending a month in a federal prison, a Honduran woman named Rosalinda Hernández finally received some good news: the government was ready to release her. In May, she and her nine-year-old son had crossed the U.S. border, seeking asylum. Under the Trump Administration's zero-tolerance policy, she had been arrested and charged with entering the country illegally, while her son was sent to a children's shelter in the Midwest. Now, however, the government was no longer prosecuting families for illegal entry, and the charges against her were being dropped. Hernández was sent by bus to a migrant shelter in downtown El Paso. "I only spoke to my son twice while I was a prisoner," Hernández told me. "Now we talk on the phone every afternoon." At the end of each conversation, she said, he asks when they'll see each other. She tells him, "This month, in July, for sure."

A few days ago, Hernández learned that it will be several more weeks, at least, before the government can return her son. In order to regain custody of their children, immigrants like Hernández need to collect documents that prove their fitness as parents and submit their fingerprints—and the fingerprinting alone takes about twenty days to

process. "Making the decision to seek asylum and leave everything behind often means that parents don't have certain documents," Linda Corchado, Hernández's immigration lawyer, told me. "And those documents are required just to begin the conversation with the government." Hernández's family in Honduras has been frantically sending Corchado documents. "I've been getting photographs, transcripts from the boy's third grade class, vaccination records, even a letter from his school teacher," Corchado said.

But the government also needs information that Hernández doesn't have: an address, a full criminal background check on every other adult who might live in the same household as her child, and proof of income. Having just left federal prison, Hernández is effectively homeless. She told me, "Once I realized what was happening, I said, 'Oh my God, what am I going to do?'"

The Trump Administration ended the zero-tolerance policy without a plan for reuniting the children it has taken from their parents (more than twenty-five hundred in the past year) with their families. In late June, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the division of the Department of Health and Human Services that is in charge of the separated children, had two thousand and fifty-three kids in its custody. The Department is no longer disclosing how many children it is holding, but immigration lawyers at the border say that many parents still don't know where their children are. Last week, a federal judge in San Diego issued an injunction ordering the Trump Administration to reunite the separated families within the next month. Given the government's disorganization, it's impossible to see how the judge's deadline can be met.

While Corchado gathered documents, Hernández called her sister, who lives in New York, to ask if she could use her home address. "My sister wanted to help, but she got scared that the government will come after her," Hernández said. "She's undocumented." Under past Administrations, O.R.R. reassured parents and family sponsors that it would never scrutinize their immigration status. But, based on a new memorandum of agreement, signed in April, O.R.R. is now required to share the information it compiles on sponsors with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Now case managers tell parents and potential sponsors that, if they submit personal information for vetting purposes, it could lead to deportation. Hernández told me, "When I heard that, it changed everything. It's not just me who's at risk here." (Some names in this article have been changed.)

Hernández and her sister decided to ask a friend who is a legal permanent resident if she could serve as a sponsor, but the woman's husband got nervous when he heard that the government would have to fingerprint him. "He said to me, 'What does this all have to do with your kid?'" Hernández told me. "I don't have anyone now," she said. "Everyone's scared. They all have doubts. It's just me, and I can't get my son."

When the Trump Administration started separating families at the border, it treated the children who had been taken from their parents as though they had come to the United States alone, and sent them to O.R.R. "The office was never set up for this," Bob Carey, the head of O.R.R. under President Obama, told me. "It was set up to reunify children who arrived here on their own"—so-called unaccompanied minors—"who had parents living in the U.S." In the past few years, O.R.R. created vetting standards to insure that children were released to reliable sponsors. Those standards have now become an impediment. "You're talking about children who've been separated from their parents by the U.S. government," Carey said. "The government has a new responsibility. How do you streamline these processes for them?" In 2016, during a period of increased child migration, O.R.R. frequently waved a requirement that sponsors pay the cost of transportation for children leaving government custody. The Trump Administration hasn't done so. According to the Times, separated parents who have managed to locate their children and find sponsors have been spending thousands of dollars on airfare. "It's this grotesque scenario where children have been removed from their parents, and they're essentially being held hostage while their parents try to come up with the money," Carey said.

Hernández hasn't even considered the costs of reunification. On Tuesday, she left the shelter for her sister's house, where she plans to start looking for someone else who can help her sponsor her son. She worried, though, that staying there for too long could put her sister at risk of deportation. "Maybe I can try to find an apartment or something," she told me. Hernández is fortunate in one respect: she has a lawyer. Corchado told me, "Many parents are leaving town before they get connected with lawyers. I fear that they will have no one to help them navigate a system full of potential landmines."

Last week, at the migrant shelter in El Paso where Hernández was staying, I spoke with Herman, an affable Guatemalan from a rural town in the northern part of the country. "My boy is in New York," he said. "We've talked on the phone, but it's been difficult. He's having trouble communicating at the shelter." His son, who is five, speaks Q'eqchi', a Mayan dialect, and his Spanish is shaky. Herman asked me if New York was far away. When I told him it was, he said he'd have to stick to his plan to stay with his father-in-law, who lives in California. "He's the only person I know in this country," he said. "I'll go to him and make arrangements for my boy from there."

Last Wednesday, Herman boarded a bus to Los Angeles, carrying a shopping bag that contained a change of clothes, a packet of food, and a Bible. We spoke several times the next day, after he arrived, as he tried to figure out how the caseworker could send him the necessary sponsorship paperwork. On Friday, the papers were faxed to

a copy store Herman had found near his father-in-law's house. He called me the next day with a question. "What is a patrocinador?" he asked, using the Spanish word for "sponsor." I tried to explain. "I see, I see," he kept saying, but his voice was growing distant. He said he'd call me back. I haven't heard from him since.

Separated At The Border, Asylum Seeker Pleads For Son's Return

By Kristen Jordan Shamus

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

Editor's note: The names of the people in this story have been changed. They are immigrants seeking asylum in the United States who entered the country illegally and agreed to talk to the Detroit Free Press on the condition of anonymity. The interviews were conducted with the help of an interpreter.

NEW ORLEANS – All around her, there was crime, destitution, hopelessness. Rosa couldn't find work and couldn't afford a home of her own.

At 31 years old, she was a single mother still living with her parents in Trujillo, a city along the northern coast of Honduras, where the murder rate is high and poverty is crippling.

Rosa worried about her parents and how they would continue to get by in Trujillo. But she worried mostly about her son, Juan. At age 14, he is just man enough for drug traffickers to try to snare him into their web.

She cried as she talked about her boy, an only child, who she described as tall and thin, with a medium complexion, like her. He loves soccer, she said, especially the Real Madrid team.

"I worried that they were going to make him sell drugs," she said.

It was time to leave Honduras, she told Juan in early May, asking him whether he'd like to come to the United States. They would be among the latest wave of migrants coming to America dreaming of security and prosperity.

"He told me, 'yes, that it was OK,' and that he would come with me. ... He said, 'We're going to see my aunt and I'm going to see my dad.'" "

Rosa's husband fled Honduras when Juan was 2, and is working in Texas now. He came to the country illegally.

"Since that time, I haven't see him again," Rosa said. "And it's been five years that we haven't been in communication."

A few months before Rosa and Juan set out on their journey, a caravan of asylum seekers from Central America set out for the U.S. via bus, the media attention that swirled around the caravan further ignited the explosive immigration debate in the U.S. In early May, President Donald Trump's

“zero-tolerance” immigration policy resulted in the separation of immigrant parents and children at the border.

Not knowing about the separation of parents and children at the U.S. border, Rosa bought a pair of bus tickets.

Her plan was to take Juan to Louisiana, where her sister, Maria, and her friend Karla had already settled with their children. She hoped to find work, possibly as a hotel maid, and send money home to Honduras to help her parents. 10 days on the road

On May 5, Rosa and Juan boarded a bus with little more than a change of clothes, some perfume, and Juan’s cellphone.

The more than 2,500-mile bus ride would take them 10 days through Guatemala and Mexico to the land of plenty, a nation built on the backs of hardworking immigrants who sought a better life, just like her.

At first, she was scared.

In her own words: MS-13 beat me up and threatened to kill me. Then the US government took my kids.

“There was a time that I was,” afraid on the journey, she said, but as more people joined them in Guatemala, “I started to feel more comfortable. ... The people with whom we traveled paid for our meals. And during the trip, my son’s father sent me \$100 so I could buy food for my son.

“Everything was fine. We got off the bus to buy meals, went to the bathroom.”

She told another immigrant, Jose Garcia, 34, of Sinaloa, Mexico, that she spent \$6,000 on the trip, paying at various checkpoints along the way to ensure their safety.

The bus stopped for the last time on May 15, just south of the Arizona border.

“We crossed a small river,” she said. “From there, we walked across a sandy highway and then we were really close to the Mexico/U.S. border.”

A rickety wall made of wood was all that stood between Rosa and Juan, and freedom.

Rosa had no way of knowing as they crawled through a hole at the bottom of the wall that their struggle had only just begun.

Border patrol officers waited on the other side. They took Rosa and Juan to a detention center in Yuma, Arizona.

Officers took everything they brought with them from home. But the most precious thing they took away from Rosa was her son.

“When we got there, there was an official who asked us whether we knew that they were separating families from the children,” she said. “I said, ‘No.’ “

Fact check: Illegal immigration: Separating the facts from fiction

She and Juan soon found themselves in “a prison where the women and children were separated. When (Juan) was getting ready to go, the police arrived and they got me

and told me they were taking him away. They let me say goodbye to him.

“The police were very good with me. They said, ‘Don’t worry. Your son is going to be fine.’ “

Juan tried to reassure Rosa, too, parroting the immigration officer, telling her he would be OK.

But in the days that followed, Rosa did worry, and not just for Juan. She said she was locked in a crowded cell with many other women when she developed a fever and began to vomit.

“I suffered,” she said. “They only gave us instant soup, and for the kids they gave crackers and a little juice. ... I was sick for five days. I didn’t eat. I didn’t drink water, nothing. I was pretty bad. That’s when I asked to see the doctor. But they wouldn’t take me.

“I told them how I was feeling, but they didn’t listen to me.”

There were no beds, so Rosa laid on the floor. She said she wondered whether she might die there on the cold, hard, floor of that Arizona detention center.

Somehow, she recovered.

“Thanks to God,” she said, “I am better.”

Nine days after she arrived in America, Rosa was moved from Yuma to a detention center in Florence, Arizona, and then a day later to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Aurora, Colorado, near Denver. She didn’t know where Juan was; her fears and worries intensified.

There was, however, one saving grace: In Colorado, there was solid food, not just instant soup for the detainees. And there were beds, too.

As the days passed, Rosa had no way of knowing how long she’d be locked away or when or whether she would ever be reunited with her son.

Faith helped her through it.

“I ask (God) to help me and to give me strength to get my baby back, just like he helped me arrive here,” Rosa said. “I know that I will be back with my son again.”

Yet she had no way of knowing that outside the detention center, political will was bending as Trump was under increasing pressure to end his zero-tolerance immigration policy that separated her from Juan. Tides turn, help shows up

By mid-June, outrage and sympathy continued to mount among the American public for families separated at the border. Headlines stretched across front pages, politicians took to Twitter and cable news channels to debate immigration policy and protests popped up around the country.

In an op-ed in the New York Times, a group of law firm CEOs wrote about their opposition to the policy, and pledged to help reunify families and represent detainees in their asylum cases.

One of the firms was Detroit-based Miller Canfield.

"I had been watching the news, just like everyone else, and I was feeling extremely helpless, and I felt that a wrong was being done to these families that were being separated, especially asylum seekers," said Tom Turner, a Miller Canfield attorney. "I have a special place in my heart for asylum seekers."

"When I was in law school, I did an internship with the United Nations and did a lot of work with refugees there. I have a lot of friends who practice in human rights," Turner said. "I have always felt strongly about refugee law and the importance of the United States accepting refugees and asylum seekers."

The pro-bono arm of the law firm asked Turner to represent Rosa in her asylum case.

"I was feeling helpless and I was feeling hopeless," he said, "and all of a sudden this opportunity came along."

At a June 25 hearing, Turner told an immigration judge in Colorado that his client was an ideal candidate for release.

"She is a 31-year-old mother who wants to be reunited with her child, and she has every reason in the world not to be a threat to the community, and there is no evidence she would be," Turner said.

"She's not a flight risk. She has ties to the community in Louisiana where she has a sister and a friend who is going to host her. She has a place to live and a fixed address so people can get in touch with her. She understands that if she flees and doesn't show up for court, she would no longer have a claim for asylum. And that's what she wants is asylum so she doesn't have to go back to Honduras, where her life would be in jeopardy."

To get out of the detention center, Rosa would need to post a \$1,500 bond, the statutory minimum. And she would need to prove she had a place to live.

Her friend, Karla, invited Rosa and Juan to live in a Louisiana apartment with her and her daughters, ages 2 and 6. Karla lives near Rosa's younger sister, Maria, who came to the U.S. in February 2017 with her daughter, Bea.

Karla said she met Rosa through a mutual friend when she moved to Trujillo six years ago to attend school. When Karla needed a place to live, Rosa's family invited her into their home.

Now, she said, it's time to return the favor.

"I will do whatever I can to receive her to get her out of there," Karla said. "They opened their doors for me when I needed it six years ago."

"I didn't even know she was coming, but I will do whatever I can for her."

Karla is an important ally for Rosa because she is a green-card holder. Her late husband was a U.S. citizen.

"One of the tricky things is that you have to have permanent legal status to post the bond, and there was some

question about whether her sister has permanent legal status," Turner said.

"We also didn't want the sister to go near the ICE facility where the bond was to be posted just in the circumstance that she gets picked up."

For Maria, 22, that was the safest move. She entered the country illegally, and wears a tether around her ankle. She has to check in with immigration officers every two months. She got a job in late June, cleaning rooms at a hotel.

Maria borrowed the \$1,500 bond money and gave it to Karla to take to the detention center. She posted Rosa's bond June 28, and Rosa was released that night.

"I felt happy, very happy," Rosa said, "because I know that if I'm out, I can do a lot for my son." A complex handoff

The plan was that when Rosa was released, she would go with volunteers from a nonprofit in Denver called Casa de Paz, where she could stay until transportation could be arranged for her to meet with her sister and Karla.

But the plan she'd made with Turner unraveled as soon as she left the detention center.

Rosa doesn't speak any English, and the scene was chaotic as she stepped outside. Protesters swarmed the street around the detention center.

Rosa didn't know what to do. She sat on a bench, waiting for help that didn't come.

Jose Garcia was released the same night as Rosa; he'd won his asylum case in court earlier that week. When detainees are released, he said, they are sent out the door with nothing — no money, and no way to communicate with family and friends, who often live in other parts of the country. They are left, he said, to figure it out on their own.

"Everyone there was separated from their kids," Garcia said. "That's all they would talk about. 'I want to go see my kids. I want to go see my son.' Some of them were saying that their wives were separated from their kids, too."

"Sometimes, the dads were being sent back and the wife being allowed to stay. What is the wife going to do on her own, and her husband is being sent back to die in Mexico? It's hard."

When he learned he was going to be released, Garcia started asking questions. He had the advantage of being fluent in Spanish and English and often acted as a translator for other detainees.

"I asked one of the guards what to do, if there was a place where they can give you shelter and food where you can go," he said. "He said there'll be some volunteers outside, just look around. When we got outside, sure thing, I see a tall guy, and he says, 'Casa de Paz. Do you need a ride?'"

"It was by coincidence. You have to ask if there's any shelter that will take you in. If you don't ask, they won't tell you."

Casa de Paz volunteers took Garcia and another man from Haiti to the nonprofit, a house in a residential neighborhood with fully stocked refrigerators and comfortable beds, plus volunteers help immigrants reconnect with their friends and families in the U.S.

When the Free Press called Casa de Paz to ask whether anyone had picked up Rosa that night, a volunteer said no one saw Rosa there waiting for them. She offered to go back to the detention center to look for her.

By the time the volunteer got there, Rosa was gone.

She sat on the bench. She waited.

Rosa knew she was supposed to go to Casa de Paz, but she didn't have an address for it, and couldn't tell people outside the detention center that she needed help getting there.

After sitting there a while, a couple of Americans approached her who seemed willing to help.

Rosa said she got into a car with them. They bought her some food and took her to a Catholic-run homeless shelter for women in Denver.

"Thank God they saw me there and they helped me," Rosa said. "They are Good Samaritans."

The next morning, Rosa said the pair came back to the homeless shelter and took her to Casa de Paz. They gave her \$30.

She was thrilled to take a shower and get clean clothes, food and a soft bed to sleep in. Casa de Paz gave her toiletries, too. She used the organization's phone to call her sister and Karla and plan her trip to Louisiana.

It was there she met Jose Garcia, and told him about her long journey to America and what happened to her at the detention center.

Rosa explained that she finally got a chance to speak to her son on June 24 — nearly six weeks after they were separated.

Her lawyer had made repeated calls to several government agencies and finally got a deportation officer to help locate her son. Soon after, Rosa learned that Juan was being held at a detention center in Florence, Arizona.

She cried as she detailed their conversation.

"I asked him, 'How are you doing?' He said, 'Hi, mommy.' I began crying and he kept telling me, 'Don't cry.' I asked him if he was eating, if he was sick, just words a mother would ask.

"He said everything was fine, that he was OK, that he was attending school, that he was forming a soccer league of champions. I heard him happy, calm, and it made me feel well."

Although the conversation eased her nerves, she longed to see him, to hug him again.

Rosa slept that night at Casa de Paz, but by 9 the next morning, she was on a Spirit Airlines flight headed for the

Pelican state. And her new friend, Garcia, was getting ready to board a bus to take him to his mother's house in California.

Sarah Jackson, who founded Casa de Paz in 2012 to help immigrant families, said donors paid for Rosa's plane ticket. Some people, like Garcia, have the means to buy their own bus tickets or plane tickets when they are released from the detention center. Others, like Rosa, do not.

When Casa de Paz pays for the tickets, she said she tries to economize to stretch the donors' dollars as far as possible. That meant Rosa flew budget airlines Spirit, and had an eight-hour layover in Houston before changing planes to go the rest of the way to Louisiana.

Volunteers drove her to the airport, and helped explain to her what to do and where to go. Hope for a reunion

Karla and Maria didn't know whether Rosa would be on the plane. They worried about whether she would understand what to do when her flight from Denver landed in Houston. Since Rosa had no cellphone, there was no way to know whether she even got on the plane, and no way to communicate where to pick her up as she left the terminal.

Karla drove across town to pick up Maria, where Maria stood outside, holding the hand of 3-year-old Bea.

She buckled her daughter into a seat in the back of Karla's car, and the five of them headed toward the airport.

About 20 minutes later, they were at the airport and trying to determine the best place to connect with Rosa.

They decided on a long orange sofa in a lounge by the doors where passengers leave the secured part of the terminal.

As they waited, Maria talked about what it has been like for her since she settled in America. She has cousins here, and she lives now with her boyfriend. It took her a year to find a job.

"Life isn't easy," Maria said, but she's happy her older sister has come to stay with her.

Maria can't drive because she doesn't have a license. She can't get one as she entered the country illegally, so she takes two buses on an hour-long route to get to her job each day.

And despite the Louisiana heat in midsummer, Maria wears long pants to hide the tether on her ankle.

"There's a lot of racist people. A lot," Maria said. "They look weird at (me) because I wear the bracelet. Just for them, it's not normal."

Maria would like to learn to speak English, and dreams of one day becoming a nurse.

She's afraid of being deported; she left an abusive relationship with Bea's father in Honduras, boarding a bus for the U.S. when he was at work one day. The trip took three months because her group would travel for a little while, and then stop and pick up odd jobs to make money, then travel a little farther and stop again.

When she finally crossed the border, Maria said she was held at a detention center for 15 days before being released with the ankle tether and instructions to report to immigration officers once every two months.

The biggest difference, though, between her experience and Rosa's is that she was able to keep Bea by her side the whole time.

An hour passed in the airport terminal.

Then, Rosa walked out from behind a pair of glass doors, and nearly collapsed with relief and joy in Maria's arms.

Rosa bent down to hug Bea, and said to her niece: "I love you." More than 2,000 motherless children

Rosa was reunited with her sister the evening before mass protests against the "zero-tolerance" immigration policy were held in more than 600 cities across the country, including New Orleans.

The "zero-tolerance" policy ultimately resulted in the separation of more than 2,000 children from their parents or guardians. And even through Trump signed an executive order stopping the separation of asylum-seeking parents from their children, reuniting immigrant parents with their children is a huge challenge.

It has been 51 days since Rosa last saw her son.

"I felt a bit better after hearing his voice after more than one month without seeing him," she said.

"He said, 'Mommy, don't worry. I'm eating well. They feed me three times (a day) ... I'm sleeping well.' At that point, he began telling me about they are going to school and they put together a soccer tournament."

She hopes to talk to him by phone again this week, but said she was told she could only call on Mondays and Thursdays, and there's no guarantee she'll be able to talk to him even if she tries calling on those days.

Rosa has no lawyer for Juan yet.

"Children are not dealt with through the Department of Homeland Security," Turner said. "It's through the Office of Refugee Resettlement. My competence is all within DHS and within ICE and within the immigration courts, which are through the Department of Justice. The juvenile process is completely separate."

But, he said, Miller Canfield is working to find an attorney who might be able to help Rosa get reunited with her son.

Rosa wishes things could be different.

Americans, she said, "shouldn't discriminate for just being immigrants. They should give us an opportunity. We don't come here with bad intentions. We're here to work to help our families.

"The truth is, if I had known this, I wouldn't have left my country because it's very hard to be separated from your children."

Maybe, just maybe, she said, it would have been worth the risk to stay in Honduras because she would still be together with Juan.

"Perhaps, yes," she said as tears fell freely. "I don't know. But, I miss my son a lot."

DHS NEWS

Poll: Liberals Hold Extreme Views On 'Abolish ICE'

By Neil Munro

[Breitbart](#), July 5, 2018

A Rasmussen poll shows that 36 percent of Democrats and 45 percent of liberals want to abolish the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, according to a Rasmussen poll.

Fifty-two percent of Democrats and 65 percent of liberals also say "the government is too aggressive ... in deporting those who are in this country illegally," according to the poll.

That response is a big problem for Democratic politicians because the anti-ICE views are a huge outlier among voters, yet are thrilling the Democrats' base in the primary elections. In a June 26 primary in New York, for example, Democratic leader Rep. Joe Crowley was beaten by a young anti-ICE candidate, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

In contrast, the Rasmussen poll of 1,000 likely voters shows that the views of swing voters are a close match to GOP voters.

Just 20 percent of swing-voters and 18 percent of Republicans support getting rid of the ICE agency, said the June 27-28 poll. Fifty-three percent of swing-voters and 69 percent of Republicans oppose "getting rid of ICE."

Similarly, only 22 percent of African-Americans want to get rid of ICE, while 56 percent oppose getting rid of ICE. That is also a big problem for Democrats because blacks are a huge share of their base.

But the poll also shows that blacks and swing voters are uncomfortable watching the ICE agency carry out their popular mission.

When asked: "Is the U.S. government too aggressive or not aggressive enough in deporting those who are in this country illegally?" 30 percent of swing voters said ICE is too aggressive, while 45 percent said they were not aggressive enough.

Among blacks, 42 percent said the government is too aggressive, while 48 percent said "not aggressive enough" or "the number of deportations is about right."

GOP voters were largely unmoved: 15 percent said "too aggressive" and 70 percent said "not aggressive enough." Nine percent said deportation numbers are "about right."

Abolish ICE? That's The Wrong Target For Outrage.

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

The sudden call by some Democrats to abolish ICE — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the agency whose multipronged mission includes deportation — makes a better bumper sticker than a blueprint for policy. Like eradicating the Internal Revenue Service, the GOP's own recurrent shibboleth, scrapping ICE reflects the risible notion that offensive policies can be wished away by atomizing the agency that enforces them. They can't be.

Many Americans — we count ourselves among them — are outraged by the Trump administration's harassment, humiliation and hounding of immigrants, including the zero-humanity policy of deterring future migrants by separating children from their parents. The instrument of some (though not all) of those policies has been ICE. But it is just that: an instrument, wielded in every instance to enforce the will of President Trump and his administration.

Indignant at those policies, abolitionists have seized on ICE as a convenient target for their wrath. But getting rid of the agency, or breaking it up, will not change the laws they dislike or, more to the point, the senseless ways in which the administration has chosen to enforce them. It won't work any more than eradicating the IRS would make taxes disappear.

No doubt, ICE is guilty of unwarranted abuses — rounding up noncriminal migrants who have led exemplary lives for years in the United States; breaking up communities and families; the unforgivable mess of splitting children from parents without any firm idea of how they might be reunited. But those excesses were carried out with the robust encouragement of the White House and Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen, whose department oversees ICE.

And why single out ICE for abolition? U.S. Customs and Border Protection, also a constituent agency of Homeland Security, has its own track record of brutality. And what of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, in the Department of Health and Human Services? It served as a co-conspirator in the splintering-without-accountability of more than 2,000 migrant families this spring, many of whom, in the case of asylum seekers who presented themselves at U.S. ports of entry, did not even commit the misdemeanor of illegally crossing the border.

A few Democrats have riled their bases with the abolish-ICE applause line; they include New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (N.Y.) and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the young firebrand who won a congressional primary in New York. None has proposed an alternative or a replacement. None has acknowledged that ICE's pre-9/11 precursor agency overseeing deportations, the Immigration

and Naturalization Service, was itself often accused of militarizing the border and mistreating migrants.

As it happens, ICE, an agency with 20,000 employees and an annual budget exceeding \$6 billion, manages more than deportations. Its investigative division handles cybercrime; human trafficking; narcotics; counter-proliferation involving nuclear materials and other military wares; child exploitation; even stolen art.

Those are all vital and legitimate functions of government, as is deportation. They aren't going to be abolished, nor should they be. The problem with ICE isn't its existence or its mission. It's that the Trump administration, in its xenophobic zeal, has weaponized it to go beyond protecting the United States and into the darker realms of oppression.

'Abolish ICE' Is The Liberal Equal Of 'Abolish The IRS': Political Noise Without Practical Purpose

[Dallas Morning News](#), July 5, 2018

When it comes to immigration issues, it's fair to say that tensions run more than a little hot. And the president doesn't lower the temperature in this debate with his often over-the-top rhetoric.

But after rightly pushing the administration off of its zero-tolerance policy that had separated 2,000 families, it's actually the president's opponents who are taking things a little too far. Some Democratic members of Congress and others are now calling for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (better known as ICE) to be eliminated.

We should all take a deep breath here.

ICE is still a relatively new agency. It was formed in 2003 as part of the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. It actually stands as a smart consolidation of the functions and jurisdiction of several border enforcement agencies.

The Trump administration's border separation policy is counter to who we are as a people

The purview for ICE is not limited to the apprehension and arrest of those crossing the border illegally. The agency also investigates border gang activity, human trafficking, arms and human smuggling, as well as commercial fraud and theft, money laundering and cash smuggling. Those are critical functions of government and necessary for the safety and security of the United States.

"Abolish ICE!" may make for good soundbite politics aimed at a small base of voters but what value does it have? It's little different than when Republicans, looking to stoke anger within the base, yammer about abolishing the IRS or shutting down the Education Department. Behind the rhetoric, there are hardly any tangible solutions.

But let's assume for a moment that some people get their way and ICE is abolished. What happens then? Even those proposing such an idea must concede that another agency would have to take over the duties of ICE and, as a result, likely necessitate hiring many of the same people who work for ICE now.

Trump's zero-tolerance immigration policy puts a strain on the border as families are separated

The truth is that ICE agents have a tough job. Many of them have to see up close the faces of mothers, fathers and children who are seeking a better life every day. They have to make difficult decisions, and they are often directed to do so by a bureaucracy in Washington.

Abolishing ICE may sound like a good idea to people who are removed from border realities or are interested in scoring political points against President Donald Trump. But at bottom it is a ploy that turns attention away from the fact that leaders in Washington, D.C., aren't willing to sit down and do the hard work of creating better immigration policy.

That would benefit everyone in the long run and eliminate the absurdity of calling for doing away with an important government law enforcement and investigative agency. What's your view?

Got an opinion about this issue? Send a letter to the editor, and you just might get published.

Don't Abolish ICE – Restructure And Rebrand It

By Jason Nichols

[Fox News](#), July 5, 2018

With controversies over the separation of families and zero-tolerance of immigration law violations at the border still in the headlines, immigration advocates and a few Democrats in Congress are calling for the dissolution of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency.

Conservatives have countered that ICE employees are law enforcement officers who keep Americans safe. While most members of ICE are indeed hardworking federal employees who investigate and apprehend criminals, under the Trump administration the agency has altered its focus.

As a result, ICE should be thoroughly reviewed, assessed, and potentially restructured – and its senior officials reassigned.

There is a common misconception that Immigration and Customs Enforcement is a longstanding American law enforcement institution. In reality, ICE was formed in 2003, after the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001. It is part of the Department of Homeland Security.

ICE was a consolidation of many agencies, with a variety of duties. Simple border security is technically not ICE's role. That responsibility falls under the umbrella of U.S.

Customs and Border Protection, more commonly known as CBP or the Border Patrol.

ICE investigates everything from terror cells to child pornography, and has 20,000 employees stationed in 46 different countries. The positive side of having all of these concerns under one umbrella is that communication between different agencies and specialists is streamlined. However, the downside is that the overall mission can get muddled.

Some ICE agents are concerned that the Trump administration's focus on immigrant families – an increasing number of which have no ties to drug cartels, street gangs, or other international criminal organizations – is obfuscating the agency's primary objectives.

Some ICE agents are concerned that the Trump administration's focus on immigrant families – an increasing number of which have no ties to drug cartels, street gangs, or other international criminal organizations that would fall under the purview of ICE – is obfuscating the agency's primary objectives.

ICE was born out of concern that organized criminal factions could infiltrate our country. Some ICE agents now want to be separated from the immigration detention and deportation proceedings, and want ICE to essentially be dissolved into two distinct agencies.

The frustrations of these agents are being heard along with the cries of immigrant families.

Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., has called for the abolition of ICE, saying that the Trump administration has moved the objectives further away from getting rid of criminals.

Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., has called out President Trump and his team for misuse of ICE and plans to introduce an ICE abolition bill. The bill already has the support of Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., and Rep. Mike Capuano, D-Mass.

Democratic U.S. House candidate Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez in New York City, who stunned the political world by defeating Democratic Rep. Joe Crowley in a primary for his seat last month, is campaigning by calling for an end to ICE.

While the Obama administration received its share of criticisms from immigration advocates, by the end of the administration the vast majority of the people deported by ICE had a criminal conviction or pending criminal charges.

The Trump administration views crossing the border without authorization as a crime in and of itself and thus, sees the undocumented immigrants as criminals.

From the October 2017 to December 2017, 65 percent of ICE arrests were for people accused or convicted of crimes other than simply crossing the border. That was down from 82 percent during the last three months of Obama's presidency. Between January 2017 and September 2017, ICE arrested 28,011 people whose only crime was crossing the border.

The Obama administration spoke of pathways to citizenship but was stifled by a deadlocked Supreme Court. Obama officials said their desire was to rid our streets of undocumented people who commit serious crimes.

The Trump's administration's view is very distinct. While the president often invokes the name of the murderous street gang MS-13, his administration views all undocumented immigrants as in violation of the law and criminal, regardless of how they live their lives.

Trump administration officials have become even more aggressive than the Obama administration, which set records for deportations. President Trump also has the benefit of a Republican Congress and a Supreme Court majority, which could get even larger given the advanced ages of Justices Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

There is not one person on the progressive left who wants to weaken our national security. On the contrary, they want to refocus on it.

While abolition of ICE has been the recent rallying cry for some, the better description of what's needed for ICE is restructuring. We want ICE or whatever comes after it to protect us from cyber criminals, human traffickers, gunrunners, and international drug cartels – not farm workers, day laborers, college students and children.

President Trump's dehumanizing rhetoric of the U.S. being "infested" by undocumented immigrants has damaged public trust in ICE and has demoralized some of its agents. Now is as good a time as any to restructure and rebrand the agency.

Dr. Jason Nichols is a full-time lecturer in the African American Studies department at the University of Maryland, College Park.

McGovern Backs Movement To Abolish ICE

By Bera Dunau

[Amherst \(MA\) Bulletin](#), July 5, 2018

NORTHAMPTON — Saying that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has evolved into an agency that's "ripping families apart," U.S. Rep. Jim McGovern has become one of the first members of Congress to call for its abolition.

McGovern, D-Worcester, made the declaration at an event last Saturday at the First Congregational Church of Amherst, where he spoke at an event with Lucio Perez, an undocumented Guatemalan immigrant who has taken refuge in the church from deportation.

In his remarks at the church, McGovern said that ICE had turned into something that is dedicated to "ripping families apart."

"The time has come ... to re-evaluate what we have in place and get rid of ICE," said McGovern, to applause.

When McGovern spoke to the Gazette last week about the Trump administration's family separation policy, he was not yet willing to endorse ICE's abolishment. When asked in

an interview Wednesday what had changed, the Democrat said that he'd been thinking about the issue, and that he was moved by the words of Perez and Eduardo Samaniego, a "Dreamer," undocumented immigrant, Hampshire College student and organizer with the Pioneer Valley Workers Center.

"I'd like to ask ... our congressman to call for the abolition of ICE," said Samaniego, in his remarks at the church last Saturday.

Earlier, Samaniego said that until ICE is abolished, people like him and families like Perez's would not be secure in their everyday life.

McGovern said that hearing these men speak compelled him to take a stand in favor of abolishing ICE.

"I learn from these experiences," said McGovern, speaking of going out into the community for events like those at the church.

McGovern said that following the event he returned to Worcester and went to buy groceries, a process that took an estimated two hours.

"On every aisle, someone was stopping me," said McGovern, saying that people were expressing horror, sometimes through tears, at children being separated from their families at the border.

On Tuesday, McGovern noted in a press release that he voted against the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and ICE in 2002 because he feared it could be used to attack immigrant communities and tear apart families.

"Unfortunately, President Trump has confirmed my worst fears," said McGovern, in the release. "Under his direction, ICE has completely lost its legitimacy — it's time to start from scratch. We should maintain and strengthen what's working, and review and re-think how immigration officers prioritize enforcement in our communities. Whatever comes next — it needs to partner with our communities and work in their best interests, not against them."

ICE was formed in 2003 through a merger of the investigative and interior enforcement elements of the former U.S. Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, according to its website. It enforces federal laws governing immigration, border control, trade and customs.

On Monday, Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Madison, announced his intention to craft a bill to abolish the organization, following a trip to the nation's southern border.

"From conducting raids at garden centers and meatpacking plants, to breaking up families at churches and schools, ICE is tearing apart families and ripping at the moral fabric of our nation," said Pocan, in a release. "Unfortunately, President Trump and his team of white nationalists, including Stephen Miller, have so misused ICE that the agency can no longer accomplish its goals effectively."

"I'm introducing legislation that would abolish ICE and crack down on the agency's blanket directive to target and round up individuals and families," Pocan continued.

According to the release, the legislation would dismantle ICE and form a commission to make recommendations to Congress on how the federal government can implement a humane immigration enforcement system.

McGovern said that he spoke to Pocan on Monday and that both of their offices are involved in drafting the bill, along with the offices of others in Congress, including Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Seattle.

"We're not rushing something to the floor," said McGovern, who confirmed that he would be a co-sponsor of the legislation.

As for its chances, McGovern noted that Democrats do not control the House. However, he said that he hopes that it promotes discussion, at a minimum.

"I think the status quo is not working," said McGovern.

Bob Massie, who is battling for the Democratic nomination for Massachusetts governor, has come out in favor of ICE abolishment and for Pocan's bill.

"Immigration control should be in the hands of the Justice Department, as it once was, not under the purview of people who are trained to hunt down terrorists," said Massie, in a Tuesday release. "I thus endorse Rep. Pocan's bill because it's time to end the cruel, seemingly limitless reign of ICE and begin treating immigration as a civil legal issue, not another front for the War on Terror."

ICE abolishment also was an issue in the Democratic primary election for New York's 14th Congressional District, where Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, running against Rep. Joe Crowley, D-Queens, made ICE abolishment a key plank in her campaign.

On Tuesday, Ocasio-Cortez decisively defeated Crowley, who chose not to call for the agency's abolishment.

Meanwhile, in the race between Rep. Richard Neal, D-Springfield, and Springfield attorney Tahira Amatul-Wadud for Massachusetts' 1st Congressional District, neither candidate has committed to the abolition of ICE.

"I'm not going to say I'm supportive of the abolition of ICE without a greater conversation around what immigration reform looks like," Amatul-Wadud said to the Gazette last week.

The country's immigration system, she said, needs to be deconstructed and rebuilt.

"We definitely need comprehensive immigration reform... and the history of ICE is problematic," she said.

Asked about the Pocan bill on Wednesday, Amatul-Wadud said it is a little premature to speak on it.

In a statement sent to the Gazette, Neal criticized the administration's immigration policy and called for ICE's overhaul.

"The agency clearly needs to be reformed, overhauled and streamlined. We can make common sense corrections like adding judges, targeting border patrol abuse, while protecting the constitutional guarantee of due process," Neal said in the statement. "I share the view of most of Americans who want a more compassionate immigration system that reflects our country's basic values. The crisis on the U.S.-Mexican border has only reinforced my belief that we need to pass comprehensive immigration reform now."

Neal also expressed outrage at family separations at the border, and noted his sponsorship of the "Keep Families Together Act," which would end the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" immigration policy.

Gazette reporter Dusty Christensen contributed to this report.

Abolish ICE? We Asked San Diego County's Members Of Congress Where They Stand

By Abby Hamblin

[San Diego Union-Tribune](#), July 5, 2018

In a sign of how incendiary the nation's immigration debate has become, some Democratic lawmakers are calling for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to be outright abolished, and President Donald Trump is being blunt about what a bad idea he thinks that is.

"You get rid of ICE, you're going to have a country that you're going to be afraid to walk out of your house," Trump said in a Fox News interview on Sunday.

To understand where our members of Congress stand on this issue, we emailed the five members of San Diego County's congressional delegation and California's two senators a set of questions on Tuesday, and said we hoped to publish them on Thursday. Here are the questions we sent.

Here are the replies we've received so far. We'll update this post with more answers as we receive them.

If you have a question you'd like us to ask our members of Congress, share it below, and we'll consider it.

Rep. Susan Davis.

Do you think ICE should be abolished, split into separate agencies or adjusted in any way? If yes, why and how? If not, why not?

"It's obvious that our current immigration system isn't working, and we need to find humane solutions to these complex problems. Whether that means reconfiguring federal agencies, passing comprehensive reforms, or establishing protections for the folks seeking a better life in the United States, all options remain on the table.

"However, the immediate problem is President Trump and the inhumane and ineffective policies of his administration. Reconfiguring or abolishing any agency doesn't change the fact that the Trump administration has

stopped the prioritization of deporting criminals and its 'zero tolerance' policy has ripped children from their parents.

"We are hearing that the 'zero tolerance' policy has forced our courts to divert resources from drug smuggling cases to handle the onslaught of people being pushed into our legal system. Now the administration wants to house migrant families on military bases, which will siphon resources from military readiness. How does this make us safer?"

What do you think of how ICE operates currently? Are you satisfied with its performance? If so, why? If not, why not?

"ICE needs to go back to following its own policy of not arresting people in sensitive areas — like hospitals, schools and churches. ICE also needs to go back to placing a priority on removing those people who are an actual danger to the community, not law-abiding grandmothers.

What's your top priority when it comes to the larger immigration issue?

"My top priority is to reunite separated families, end the 'zero tolerance' policy that is overloading our courts and diverting critical resources from drug cases, and protect the Dreamers and pass a permanent DACA fix."

Rep. Duncan Hunter

"The men and women serving as agents of both the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are tasked with the responsibility of protecting our border and enforcing U.S. law. Representing a border region, I know firsthand the hard work and dedication they have in meeting these important responsibilities and those criticizing them as a means to further a political agenda only make their job of protecting the American homeland that much more difficult. I support the mission of ICE and CBP and the only proposals that should be considered in reorganizing these agencies would be those that are consistent and beneficial with that mission and to the agents who serve.

"As for the larger immigration issue as a whole, successful reform is dependent on two things; a border wall to establish once and for all a secure border boundary and a mandatory E-Verify system that will hold employers accountable and, essentially, cut off the current jobs magnet in the U.S. All other reforms, while necessary, will only be successful if first a wall is built and an E-Verify system is in place."

Rep. Darrell Issa

Issa has not yet responded.

Rep. Scott Peters

Do you think ICE should be abolished, split into separate agencies or adjusted in any way? If yes, why and how? If not, why not?

"Abolishing ICE won't change President Trump's disastrous immigration policies — the cruel practice of

separating and detaining families comes from the top. I oppose these and other brutish tactics, such as raiding workplaces and targeting undocumented immigrants at sensitive locations. Both are a result of the administration's zero tolerance policy. This directive from the White House has diverted personnel and resources at ICE from their primary responsibilities — narcotics enforcement, investigating cybercrimes, human smuggling, firearms smuggling, and counterterrorism.

"What needs to change is the way President Trump views families, individuals, and children who come to the U.S. in search of safety and better lives as our ancestors did."

What do you think of how ICE operates currently? Are you satisfied with its performance? If so, why? If not, why not?

"I strongly disagree with the current detention and deportation operations, which came from Trump's Executive Order that directed ICE to seek out all undocumented immigrants for deportation and rescinded existing enforcement policies that conflicted with the new directive. Previous administrations focused enforcement activity on removing national security threats, human and drug traffickers, gang members, and convicted felons."

"Now, the Trump administration is pursuing policies motivated by hate and fear that divert money and resources away from addressing real threats. Separating families and tearing children away from their parents; deporting veterans and their spouses; eliminating due process in immigration proceedings; and targeting hard-working individuals that are helping to grow our economy does not make us safer.

"I am also extremely concerned about reports of abuse of those being detained by ICE agents. Whether it's an investigation by Congress, the Inspector General, or another outside agency, we must get to the bottom of it, target those responsible, and hold them accountable. And then we must enforce serious reforms to make sure it doesn't continue, particularly if there is a culture of abuse. We need to know the facts and we need to put an end to it."

What's your top priority when it comes to the larger immigration issue?

"We need our immigration policies to reflect our values: welcoming those seeking opportunity and refuge; safeguarding the institution of family; and investing in the right technology to protect our communities from drugs and crime.

"To achieve this, we need to stop wasting time on partisan bills that have no chance of passing. In 2013, an overwhelming majority of Senators passed a bill that provided a 13-year path to citizenship for most undocumented immigrants, raised the cap on visas for high-skilled workers, established a new visa program for farm workers, hired more Border Patrol Agents, and invested billions to increase the use of advanced technology at the border. Unfortunately, the

bill never got a vote in the House and Congress hasn't revisited the conversation since.

"We should focus on bipartisan proposals to address the immediate problems — pass the USA Act to modernize our border security and give certainty to Dreamers."

Rep. Juan Vargas

Vargas has not yet responded.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein

Feinstein has not yet responded.

Sen. Kamala Harris

Do you think ICE should be abolished, split into separate agencies or adjusted in any way? If yes, why and how? If not, why not?

"ICE abuses target immigrants, and threatens public safety and national security. We've got to critically reexamine its role, conduct a complete overhaul of the agency's mission, culture, and operations and potentially start over."

What do you think of how ICE operates currently? Are you satisfied with its performance? If so, why? If not, why not?

"This administration has forced ICE on mass deportation, instead of public safety. We've seen parents separated from children, crime victims taken from courthouses, detention facilities rampant with sexual abuse and horrible medical conditions, detention of pregnant women and now families, and an irresponsible focus on immigrants who pose no harm to communities. We should be directing public safety resources toward combating gangs and transnational criminal organizations instead of those who are living law abiding lives."

What's your top priority when it comes to the larger immigration issue?

"We can and must reunite separated families, make the DREAM Act law, which would protect 2.1 million Dreamers from deportation, and then work to pass comprehensive immigration reform."

As The 'Abolish ICE' Movement Grows, The White House Announces It Will 'Save ICE'

[NBC News](#), July 5, 2018

WASHINGTON — A day after an anti-ICE protestor scaled the base of the Statue of Liberty on July 4th, the White House is rolling out its own slogan — "SAVE ICE."

With President Donald Trump eager for a battle with Democrats over the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, the White House on Thursday sent out a fact sheet vowing to "SAVE ICE," warning that abolishing it would "erase America's borders and open the floodgates to more crime, drugs, and terrorism."

"Calls to abolish ICE are an insult to these heroic law enforcement officers," the White House document states.

ICE does not patrol the borders — that's the job of a separate agency, Customs and Border Protection. And most "Abolish ICE" advocates, who call it a "deportation force," want the agency's responsibilities transferred to a different part of the federal government, not eliminated entirely.

Trump and the White House clearly think they have identified a political winner on immigration, the president's signature issue, using the fight over ICE to both portray Democrats as extreme and shift the conversation from the family separation crisis at the border, which is still far from resolved.

"I hope they keep thinking about it, because they're going to get beaten so badly," Trump told Fox News last week of the issue.

"Abolish ICE," which began as an intentionally provocative online slogan, has taken off.

Within the past three weeks, leading Democratic senators have endorsed the effort as more members of Congress join the cause seemingly every day. Recently, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and giant-slayer Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who defeated 20-year incumbent Rep. Joe Crowley in a Queens/Bronx primary last month, got on board.

On Wednesday, the movement reached a new height, literally, when a woman climbed up the base of the Statue of Liberty after participating in an "Abolish ICE" protest to call attention to the plight of immigrants at the a monument that has welcomed many generations of them.

Still, many other Democrats are rejecting the slogan, and those in favor of abolishing ICE number fewer than two dozen out of nearly 250 Democrats in Congress, according to a rough tally kept by NBC News.

For instance, Rep. Beto O'Rourke, D-Texas, a progressive darling who is running for Senate against Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas., has stopped just short of demanding the abolition of ICE — earning hackles from a participant at a recent town hall who said Democrats need to "grow a backbone" on the issue.

"Don't lecture me about the border," O'Rourke shot back, according to the Texas Tribune. "I'm doing everything that I can right now."

How 'Abolish ICE' Went From Tweet To 2020 Litmus Test

By Ben Foldy

[Financial Times](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from the Financial Times are available to FT subscribers by clicking the link.

Trump Nominates Former Energy Official To Lead Homeland Security Tech Research Arm

By Morgan Chalfant

[The Hill](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump on Thursday announced that he is tapping William Bryan, an Army veteran and former Department of Energy official, to lead the Department of Homeland Security's technology research and development arm.

Bryan has been serving as undersecretary of science and technology at the department in an acting capacity since May 2017. Trump's decision will allow him to formally assume the position, if confirmed by the Senate.

Bryan has held various positions in the Defense and Energy departments, including a role in which he helped spearhead federal efforts to enhance security of the nation's energy infrastructure. He served as president of ValueBridge International's Energy Group before joining the Trump administration.

The department's Science and Technology Directorate spearheads research and development of emerging technologies, working with the private sector and academia to develop and test high-tech security solutions.

For instance, on Thursday, the directorate announced that it has partnered with Silicon Valley-based cyber firm Lookout to bring a new mobile device security platform to the government and private sector that protects iOS and Android devices from phishing attacks.

Trump's fiscal 2019 budget proposal slashed funding for the directorate, instead reallocating some of the funds for cybersecurity research to Homeland Security's chief cybersecurity and infrastructure protection unit — known formally as the National Protection and Programs Directorate.

Trump Ordered The Border Patrol To Hire More Agents, But Instead, It's Losing Them

By Rachel Cohrs

[Dallas Morning News](#), July 5, 2018

WASHINGTON — Five days after his inauguration, President Donald Trump ordered the Department of Homeland Security to add 5,000 Border Patrol agents to a staff of roughly 20,000. But instead of gaining agents, the Border Patrol has been losing them.

A Government Accountability Office report last week found that attrition has outstripped improvements in recruiting and hiring.

Rep. Filemon Vela, a Brownsville Democrat, requested the report along with three other representatives and two senators.

The Border Patrol, part of Customs and Border Protection and its parent agency, the Department of Homeland Security, more than doubled its recruitment budget from \$432,775 in fiscal year 2015 to \$1,019,182 in 2016 and \$1,019,940 in 2017. The bolstered recruitment efforts were effective. Applications increased and training sped up.

Improvements cut the average time from a job announcement closing to deployment of an agent from 628 days to 274 days. In the first half of 2018, the Border Patrol hired nearly double the number of agents it brought on over the same period in 2017.

But it wasn't enough to keep up with departures.

In 2017, the Border Patrol posted a net loss of nearly 400 agents.

That left staffing at almost 7,000 below Trump's target.

CBP officials say that low pay — the starting salary is \$52,583 — and postings in remote, undesirable locations make retention hard.

Unemployment is also at a 10-year low. That also makes it harder to recruit and retain agents, said Doris Meissner, a former Immigration and Naturalization Service director who now works at the Migration Policy Institute.

CBP faces competition from other branches of the federal government. Last year, 39 percent of Border Patrol agents who quit left to go work for another federal agency.

Trump's plan for Border Patrol, ICE hiring surges face timing, security obstacles

Legislative response

Trump's 2019 budget request would have provided \$211 million to hire 750 more Border Patrol agents. The latest funding bill from the Senate Appropriations Committee provides enough for half that many new agents. Last year, Congress rejected funding for any additional agents, with lawmakers noting that the agency was already well below its authorized staffing levels and hadn't been able to fill existing vacancies.

Ali Noorani, executive director of the immigrant advocacy group National Immigration Forum, said the administration's push for more border agents is a "strategy of throwing more money at the problem, and is not a good use of taxpayer dollars."

Rep. Will Hurd, a San Antonio Republican, introduced a bill in May with Vela to make it easier for Border Patrol agents to collect overtime.

"We already have dangerous manpower shortages at the border; we cannot afford such high turnover as well," said Rep. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., who is co-sponsoring the measure. "Fixing these compensation concerns will address one of the problems causing lack of retention of these highly qualified individuals."

Last year, Vela and another Texas Democrat, Rep. Henry Cuellar of Laredo, co-sponsored a bill that would make it easier for CBP to hire law enforcement and military veterans by letting them waive the requirement to pass a polygraph test. Cuellar said on the House floor that the measure would help address staffing shortages by avoiding "laborious," "failure-prone" and "redundant" tests.

The bill passed the House, but stalled in the Senate.

Homeland Security job applicants more attracted by opportunity than Trump's call for border protection

The controversy

The Trump administration's zero-tolerance policy, requiring criminal prosecution of anyone caught crossing the border illegally, has prompted a national debate about immigration enforcement and border policy.

Some Democrats have called for abolishing or overhauling Immigration and Customs Enforcement, another agency within DHS, in response to a crisis involving thousands of children separated from their migrant parents.

Abolishing ICE was one of the campaign promises of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who beat Rep. Joe Crowley in last week's Democratic primary in New York, a stunning upset that ousted a member of the party's leadership who'd been seen as a potential speaker someday.

The controversy has led to finger-pointing between sister agencies at DHS and could damage the reputation of agencies already struggling to keep up with hiring pressure.

"This protest ... about family separations on the border, ICE doesn't separate families on the border," Thomas Homan, Trump's former acting ICE director, told Fox News last week. "That's the Border Patrol. We're a different agency."

Last week, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen chose Ronald Vitiello as acting director and deputy director of ICE. Vitiello was previously the acting deputy commissioner of CBP and served as chief of the Border Patrol.

Brandon Judd, president of the National Border Patrol Council, told NPR last month that Border Patrol agents aren't responsible for family separations because they separate children for only a short amount of time. He made the distinction that families and children are transferred to other federal agencies for longer-term detention after the initial separation by the Border Patrol.

"We've been called the Gestapo. We've been called Nazis. I mean, we've been called everything in the media," Judd said. "The fact of the matter is as Border Patrol agents, we are not separating families, except for a few hours for them to go see a magistrate or in extreme cases."

Meissner said in her experience working with law enforcement, she did not think the zero-tolerance policy would have a negative impact on hiring. "Individuals who are drawn to law enforcement or are already in law enforcement have a sense of loyalty and commitment to enforcing the laws of the country," Meissner said. "Their training heavily reinforces the idea that their responsibility is to enforce laws, and that laws are the responsibility of others to determine."

Noorani said while the process of criminally prosecuting migrants was complicated, the important issue is that DHS has been separating families.

"I don't think any American wants to be that person, and I have to believe that is not what the majority of Border Patrol and immigration enforcement officers signed up to do," Noorani said.

BORDER SECURITY

Arrests At U.S.-Mexico Border Drop For First Time In Months

By Ron Nixon

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

Federal immigration agents apprehended just over 42,500 people at the southwestern border in June, according to data released on Thursday by the Department of Homeland Security, a drop in the number of migrants trying to enter the United States after a spike the previous three months.

Border Patrol agents arrested 34,114 people trying to enter the country while customs officers at ports of entry denied entry to 8,451 people, including families and children who showed up at the border alone, the numbers show.

About 5,562 unaccompanied children showed up at the border in June, while 12,192 people traveling in family groups were denied entry, the data shows.

The apprehension statistics show a drop in the number of people trying to enter the country after the numbers exceeded more than 50,000 in each of the three months before June. That came after a year in which the numbers of people apprehended had dropped to a more-than 40-year low.

On Thursday, Homeland Security officials attributed the drop in apprehensions to the hard-line immigration policies of the Trump administration.

"Following the implementation of the administration's zero-tolerance policy, the June 2018 southwest border migration numbers declined by 18 percent when compared to the previous month," said Tyler Q. Houlton, a department spokesman, who was referring to the administration's policy that seeks to prosecute all people who illegally enter the country.

The new policy resulted in thousands of children being separated from their families and prompted national protests.

Mr. Trump signed an executive order last month directing agencies to stop separating children from their families, but said the zero-tolerance policy remained in force. The president signed the executive order days after he said the only way to end the division of families was through congressional action, because "you can't do it through an executive order."

But he changed his mind after a barrage of criticism from congressional Democrats, immigration activists and even some Republicans.

The increase in the number of people attempting to enter the country had become a source of frustration for the Trump administration.

Some White House officials had accused the department of not doing enough to reduce the number of illegal crossings. Mr. Trump ordered thousands of National Guard troops to the border to help the Border Patrol. The troops are not allowed to take part in immigration enforcement, however.

Still, despite the drop in the number of people caught trying to cross the border last month, the data suggest that thousands of men, women and children are still willing to brave the long trek from Central America to escape violent gangs and drug cartels.

Number Of Southwestern Border Crossers Drop In June

By Charles Fain Lehman

[Washington Free Beacon](#), July 5, 2018

The number of individuals apprehended by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) while trying to illegally cross the southwestern border fell by 18 percent in June, new data from the agency show.

After three successive months of more than 50,000 crossers apprehended, CBP reported 42,565 border crossers in the month of June. Department of Homeland Security press secretary Tyler Q. Houlton attributed the drop to President Donald Trump's "zero-tolerance" policy, which requires the criminal prosecution of any person who is apprehended.

A decline in crossers in June, as the weather grows hotter and other seasonal immigration patterns change, is not unprecedented. Similar drops were apparent in FY 2013 and 2016, according to CBP's data; a less precipitous drop happened between May and June of FY 2014. In FY 2015, illegal immigration remained roughly flat between the two months, and rates actually rose in FY 2017, from all-time lows recorded in the preceding months.

Much of the Trump administration's push on immigration enforcement along the border is a response to an increase in illegal immigration following FY 2017's historic lows. That drop was likely precipitated by the so-called Trump effect, as illegal immigration dried up in response to Trump's hardline border enforcement stance. But over the course of FY 2018, immigration has steadily risen to rates more in line with President Barack Obama's second term in office.

The zero-tolerance policy has led to a marked increase in the number of prosecutions of border crossers, according to at least one recent analysis. At the same time, it has stoked political controversy, as a preexisting court-mandated agreement compelled the separation of prosecuted parents from their children. That political firestorm in turn prompted a

more radical shift among national Democrats, now embroiled in a fight over whether or not to abolish ICE, a federal agency responsible for within-the-nation immigration enforcement.

While the number of people overall attempting to cross the border under zero-tolerance has fallen, the number of families apprehended attempting to enter between ports of entry has remained constant, at around 9,000 people with families per month. The number of family units attempting to enter at ports of entry has fallen, however, by some 2,000 since May.

Unaccompanied minors, whom the Department of Homeland Security (which oversees CBP) routinely warns are particularly at risk of death or injury in the dangerous trek north, were apprehended less frequently at the border in June. The number detained between ports of entry fell by more than 1,000, while the number apprehended at ports of entry was cut almost in half, to 447. It is unclear if either the UAC or the family unit trends accord with historical norms for the shift from May to June.

DHS saw the numbers as a sign of progress, and issued further caution to would-be illegal border crossers about attempting the journey.

"DHS will continue to enforce the rule of law and uphold our nation's immigration laws as passed by Congress," Houlton said. "As we have said before, the journey north is dangerous and puts individuals in the hands of smugglers and traffickers. We continue to call on Congress to address the crisis at the border by closing legal loopholes that drive illegal immigration."

DHS Touts Drop In Border Crossings Amid 'zero Tolerance' Push

By Alex Pappas

[Fox News](#), July 5, 2018

The Department of Homeland Security said Thursday that border apprehensions dropped by 18 percent last month after the Trump administration implemented its "zero-tolerance policy" toward illegal immigrants crossing the border.

"Following the implementation of the administration's zero-tolerance policy, the June 2018 Southwest Border Migration numbers declined by 18 percent when compared to the previous month," DHS press secretary Tyler Q. Houlton said in a statement.

The statement reflects a renewed administration effort to defend the tough enforcement policy, amid the outcry over since-halted family separations that resulted from it.

According to numbers released by DHS, 34,114 individuals were detained in June, compared to 40,338 in May and 38,243 in April.

"DHS will continue to enforce the rule of law and uphold our nation's immigration laws as passed by Congress,"

Houlton said. "As we have said before, the journey north is dangerous and puts individuals in the hands of smugglers and traffickers. We continue to call on Congress to address the crisis at the border by closing legal loopholes that drive illegal immigration."

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has described the administration's policy as "zero-tolerance, zero releases and 100 percent prosecution" for those who cross the border illegally.

But more than 2,300 minors were separated from their families at the border from May 5 through June 9, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

After an intense outcry over the separation of parents and children at the border, President Trump signed an executive order to allow children to stay with parents caught crossing the border illegally.

On Thursday, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said the department will comply with a federal court order to reunite illegal immigrant children who have been separated from their parents after being detained at the border.

Fox News' Shira Bush, Jenny Buchholz, Adam Shaw and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Alex Pappas is a politics reporter at FoxNews.com.

Border Arrests Fall By 18 Percent In June; Many Are Families

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

SAN DIEGO (AP) – U.S. authorities say border arrests fell 18 percent in June from a month earlier to the lowest levels since February.

Customs and Border Protection said Thursday that it made about 42,600 arrests in June compared with nearly 52,000 in May. That's still nearly double the number in June 2017.

It is unclear what drove the decline. Seasonal trends may be a big influence as scorching, potentially lethal heat deters crossers. President Donald Trump's "zero-tolerance" policy, which resulted in separation of hundreds of families, may also be a driver.

The Border Patrol, which polices between ports of entry, made about 34,000 arrests. The rest occurred at official border crossings.

More than 4 of 10 Border Patrol arrests were of people who came as families or children traveling alone.

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Arrests Drop At U.S.-Mexico Border In June, But Cause Unclear

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Border Crossings Down Under Trump 'Zero Tolerance' Policy

By Maya Rhodan

[TIME](#), July 5, 2018

Apprehensions at the U.S.-Mexico border fell in June amid the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy, under which any person caught crossing the border illegally is criminally prosecuted.

There was an 18% drop in illegal border crossings between May and June, according to new data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection. A total of 34,114 migrants were apprehended at the border in June, down from 40,338 in May and 38,243 in April.

The decline follows months of upticks in crossings this year after historic lows in 2017. Border crossings are still far below the peak that was reached in decades past.

Department of Homeland Security Press Secretary Tyler Houlton referred to the "zero tolerance" policy in a Thursday statement about the new figures.

"As we have said before, the journey north is dangerous and puts individuals in the hands of smugglers and traffickers," Houlton's statement reads. "We continue to call on Congress to address the crisis at the border by closing legal loopholes that drive illegal immigration."

Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced this past spring that officials would be implementing the zero tolerance policy as a way of getting tough on illegal immigration. The policy faced intense backlash because it led to the separation of thousands of children from their parents at the border, as children could not be incarcerated with their parents.

President Donald Trump signed an executive order in June to curtail the practice of separating families. Still, as many as 3,000 kids remain in federal custody away from their parents. As of last week, the administration is under a court order to reunite families within a short timeframe.

Southwest Border Crossings Drop In June

By Rafael Bernal

[The Hill](#), July 5, 2018

Apprehensions of people at the border fell sharply in June, in keeping with seasonal patterns over the past five years, amid the Trump administration's ongoing "zero tolerance" crackdown.

In June, U.S. authorities apprehended 34,114 people crossing the border illegally, a 15.4 percent decrease from the 40,338 apprehended in May, according to numbers released by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on Thursday.

The sum of apprehensions and inadmissibles — people turned away at ports of entry — decreased to 42,565 in June, an 18 percent drop from May's 51,905. That number is used as a guideline to measure illegal border crossing attempts.

Migration numbers at the southwest border tend to grow in the spring and then drop in June, as hot weather makes the crossing more dangerous.

The 2018 May-June drop is almost identical to a 17.5 percent drop in June 2016.

But numbers had dropped sharply in 2017, the first year of the Trump administration, breaking recent seasonal patterns.

Crossings returned to Obama-era numbers in 2018, reportedly sparking anger from President Trump against Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen.

The Department of Justice earlier this year enacted a zero tolerance policy on illegal border crossings, which administration officials originally touted as a deterrent for future illegal immigration.

Under that policy, more than 2,000 children were separated from their parents, leading to global and bipartisan backlash.

Administration officials have blamed the separations on Congress, accusing lawmakers of failing to pass significant immigration reform.

"DHS will continue to enforce the rule of law and uphold our nation's immigration laws as passed by Congress. As we have said before, the journey north is dangerous and puts individuals in the hands of smugglers and traffickers. We continue to call on Congress to address the crisis at the border by closing legal loopholes that drive illegal immigration," Tyler Houlton, a spokesman for Nielsen, in a statement.

Last month, Nielsen said it was "offensive" to suggest the separations are intentional, saying they are essentially an inevitable byproduct of laws passed by Congress, even though the shift came earlier this year and Trump later signed an executive order ending his own policy.

DHS authorities touted the zero tolerance policy as part of the June downturn.

"Following the implementation of the Administration's zero-tolerance policy, the June 2018 Southwest Border Migration numbers declined by 18 percent when compared to the previous month," Houlton said.

Border Patrol's Down East Operations Rankle Canadian Fishermen

By Peter McGuire

[Portland \(ME\) Press Herald](#), July 5, 2018

U.S. Border Patrol agents have ramped up their activities along Maine's maritime border with Canada in an operation that has rankled Canadian fishermen, surprised

Americans and alarmed civil liberties groups already concerned about the agency's activities.

The agents are stopping vessels in a rich lobster fishing area known as the Gray Zone that is claimed by both the United States and Canada.

Twenty-one Canadian vessels and an unknown number of American boats have been questioned by Border Patrol since October 2017 with no immigration arrests, said Stephanie Malin, a Customs and Border Protection spokeswoman.

Maine fishermen report being stopped and asked for identification, and some boats have reportedly been boarded by Border Patrol agents. Canadian fishermen, meanwhile, say that Border Patrol agents shouldn't be boarding their vessels when they're in international waters.

John Drouin, a Maine lobsterman from Cutler and chairman of the Lobster Zone A Council, said Border Patrol has been cruising the Down East coast from Cutler to Jonesport. He was stopped two weeks ago in Cutler Harbor and asked for identification, and his son has been stopped and boarded about six miles offshore, Drouin said. By now, most of the local lobstermen have been questioned by Border Patrol, Drouin added.

In 40 years fishing off Maine, this is the first time he can remember Border Patrol operating offshore like this, Drouin said.

"I personally haven't seen Border Patrol in the past," he said.

Any vessel that does not stop when ordered to by Border Patrol agents can be criminally charged, Malin said.

Border Patrol is the uniformed law enforcement branch of Customs and Border Protection, which is part of the Department of Homeland Security. Increasing security along the nation's borders has been a focus of the Trump administration.

The stops have been inconvenient, Drouin said, but he doesn't feel harassed. However, he hasn't been able to get a good answer for the sudden uptick in patrols.

"I tried to asked them; they are tight-lipped, they are not going to tell me what is going on," he said.

Kristan Porter, another Cutler lobsterman and president of the Maine Lobstermen's Association, said he hasn't been stopped by Border Patrol yet, but most of the 25 or 30 lobstermen in town have.

"They've been very cordial," he said. "We've seen them in the past, but not on this scale. I don't know what the deal is, if it is doing this area now and another area later."

The recent patrols are part of the Border Patrol's routine operations, Malin said in an emailed response to questions.

"Houlton Sector Border Patrol has conducted operations in the past in this area and will continue to conduct operations in the waters off the Coast of Maine in jurisdictional waters of the United States," she said, adding

that the agency was conducting regular patrol operations in June to enforce immigration laws and other violations of federal law.

Malin would not say how long the operation lasted or if it is ongoing. She said the agency did not have statistics on how many U.S. vessels have been stopped in Maine this year and the last five years, and would not say how many vessels and personnel were involved in offshore Border Patrol operations or where precisely agents are patrolling. Customs and Border Protection has its own boats and aircraft.

Federal law gives Border Patrol the authority to stop, search and examine any vehicle entering the U.S. including those in a maritime environment, Malin said. The agency's authority extends to the borders of the U.S., including the area around Machias Seal Island claimed by the U.S. and Canada, she noted.

The U.S. State Department did not respond to questions about U.S. territorial claims on Machias Seal Island and the Gray Zone.

OUT OF CONTROL?

Border Patrol has recently increased enforcement operations on major New England highways including a day-long roadblock on Interstate 95 near Lincoln in June and regular immigration checks of passengers at the Bangor bus station.

It is worrisome that Border Patrol has apparently extended its operations to offshore areas in Maine, said Zachary Heiden, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Maine.

"Customs and Border Protection seems engaged in such a wide variety of troublesome practices, and they are not particularly forthcoming about what they are doing and why they are doing it, which is troubling," Heiden added. "We are concerned that they are out of control."

The ACLU has sued the Department of Homeland Security to obtain records relating to Border Patrol operations in northern New England, including bus station and highway checkpoints.

"We are very committed to the idea that law enforcement should not be stopping and questioning people unless they have a good reason to," Heiden said. "They shouldn't simply be in the business of stopping people at random who are not suspected of doing anything wrong, whether that is on our roads or our water."

The Border Patrol operations came to light this week when fishermen from New Brunswick's Grand Manan Island told news organizations that they had been stopped in Canadian waters by U.S. Border Patrol and questioned about illegal immigrants.

Laurence Cook, chairman of the lobster committee of the Grand Manan Fishermen's Association, told the Globe and Mail newspaper that in the last two weeks at least 10

Canadian vessels were stopped by border patrol around Machias Seal Island in the Gray Zone.

"There's been a bit of a misunderstanding there somewhere," Cook told the newspaper. "They're in international waters, so Border Patrol shouldn't be boarding Canadian vessels."

In a written statement, the fisherman's association said American and Canadian fishermen have jointly fished the 102-square-mile area for years.

"We understand that a few Grand Manan fishermen were approached by United States Border Patrol during the month of June. Our understanding is that this was part of a regular exercise conducted along the U.S. marine border," the association said.

A representative for the association did not respond to an interview request Thursday.

The Canadian government is investigating incidents that occurred in Canadian waters, and engaging U.S. agencies involved in the matter, John Babcock, a spokesman for Global Affairs Canada, said in an email.

"Canada's sovereignty over the Machias Seal Island and the surrounding waters is long-standing and has a strong foundation in international law," Babcock said.

"Until the matter of the boundary is resolved, we will continue to take practical steps with the U.S. to ensure that the area is well managed."

Malin, the Customs and Border Protection spokeswoman, said Border Patrol does not board Canadian vessels without consent or probable cause.

The dispute over the Gray Zone around Machias Seal Island dates to the period following the American Revolution. The Canadian Coast Guard maintains a manned lighthouse on the island, but American and Canadian fishermen prowl the rich lobster areas nearby. Tension over fishing rights in the area can get heated when the price of lobster is high, leading to threats and accusations of line-cutting and other sabotage.

Canada Investigates Run-ins Between US Customs, Fishermen

By Patrick Whittle

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) – The Canadian government said Thursday it's investigating a series of encounters in which U.S. border patrols have approached Canadian fishing vessels in a disputed island area off the East Coast.

The area in question is around Machias Seal Island, a 20-acre (8-hectare) rock island at the Maine-New Brunswick border.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said Thursday agents whose sector covers the area have interviewed workers on 21 Canadian vessels this fiscal year while

conducting regular patrols to enforce immigration laws. The agency said it hasn't made any arrests, and it's operating within its jurisdiction.

But some Canadian fishermen have described the encounters as harassment. Laurence Cook, chair of the Grand Manan Fishermen's Association lobster committee, wrote in a June 25 Facebook post that agents who attempted to stop a Canadian fisherman were "typical American bullies."

Canada is contacting U.S. agencies about the encounters, said John Babcock, a spokesman for Global Affairs Canada. He said Canada considers its sovereignty over the area to be "longstanding" and grounded in international law.

"Until the matter of the boundary is resolved, we will continue to take practical steps with the U.S. to ensure that the area is well managed," Babcock said. "Canada and the U.S. have a long history of cooperation which ensures that fishing in this area in well-managed and safe for both countries."

The Grand Manan Fishermen's Association said it will work with the Canadian government to make sure it is able to keep fishing activities going in a normal fashion.

Machias Seal Island is located off Cutler, Maine, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) up the coast from Portland. The island's only residents, other than numerous seabirds such as puffins, are lighthouse keepers, who are employed by the Canadian Coast Guard.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection described the island area as a "Grey Zone" on Thursday, while Canadian authorities said Canada's title to the area is clear. The dispute has fueled tension between American and Canadian fishermen over the years, as the waters around the island are especially important lobstering grounds.

"It's a pretty significant area," said Geoff Irvine, executive director of the Lobster Council of Canada.

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Why Canadians Are Upset About Border Patrol Run-ins Off Machias Seal Island

[Boston](#), July 5, 2018

Border Patrol agents in northern New England apparently aren't just ramping up their immigration enforcement on land. They're also doing so on the water.

Canada is investigating at least two incidents in which two Canadian fishing vessels were reportedly stopped and questioned by U.S. Border Patrol agents in disputed waters off Maine, a spokesman for the country's foreign affairs department confirmed Thursday.

The CBC reported Wednesday that the encounters occurred on June 24 and 25 in a so-called "grey zone" around

Machias Seal Island and North Rock between the Gulf of Maine and the Bay of Fundy. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection says the agents were just conducting "regular" patrol operations. However, Canadian officials are not happy.

"They're being harassed," Rick Doucet, New Brunswick's fisheries minister, told the Toronto-based National Post. "Canadian fishermen are being harassed by U.S. border patrol. As far as I'm concerned, it needs to stop immediately."

Doucet said Wednesday that the "heavily armed" Border Patrol agents were looking for undocumented immigrants, but that the fishermen were just "doing their job."

"Absolutely overkill," he said of the "disturbing" stops.

Laurence Cook, the chair of the Grand Manan Fisherman's Association, wrote on Facebook at the time that the Border Patrol agents said they were "looking for illegal immigrants."

"Typical American bullies," Cook wrote in the June 25 post, asserting that the Canadian vessels were rightly fishing in Canadian water.

The flare-up — amid recently heightened tensions between the United States and Canadian government over trade — revolves around the last, unresolved land-border dispute between the two longtime North American allies.

Machias Seal Island, a 20-acre island home to a Canadian lighthouse, no permanent human residents, and lots of puffins, has been claimed by both countries since the 18th century. The island itself is of little value; however, the surrounding waters are home to an increasingly valuable lobster catch.

According to the local fisherman's association, both American and Canadian fleets have fished the 277-square-mile overlap "for years" — even if the relationship between individual lobstermen is said to be "strained."

Cook told the National Post in an interview Wednesday that at least 10 Canadian fishing boats have been intercepted by the U.S. Border Patrol in the disputed area in the past two weeks and that some of them have even been boarded by agents looking for undocumented immigrants.

"They're in international waters, so border patrol shouldn't be boarding Canadian vessels," he said.

Stephanie Malin, a spokeswoman for CBP, says that the Border Patrol has routinely patrolled "within the water boundaries of the United States" for decades and that such enforcement operations are soundly within the agency's jurisdiction. Additionally, Malin said that Border Patrol agents would not board any vessel without permission or probable cause.

"U.S. Border Patrol was conducting regular patrol operations to enforce immigration laws and other violations of federal law that they may encounter in the course of their duties during the operation in June," she said in a statement.

Malin noted that Houlton Sector Border Patrol, which patrols the entire state of Maine, will continue to conduct operations in the U.S. waters off the state's coast. So far, 21 Canadian vessels have been interviewed by local agents in the 2018 fiscal year, she said, with zero immigration arrests made. Border agents have also assisted in two rescues this fiscal year.

But as one would expect with a territorial dispute, neither side is ceding their claim to the area.

John Babcock, a spokesman for Global Affairs Canada, said in a statement Thursday that the stops occurred in Canadian waters. Global Affairs will be contacting the "U.S. agencies involved in the matter" to sort things out, he said.

"Canada's sovereignty over the Machias Seal Island and the surrounding waters is long standing and has a strong foundation in international law," he said. "Until the matter of the boundary is resolved, we will continue to take practical steps with the U.S. to ensure that the area is well managed."

Babcock added that the two countries "have a long history of cooperation which ensures that fishing in this area is well-managed and safe for both countries."

'It Baffles Me': Maine Lobster Fisherman Says U.S. Border Patrol Has Been Boarding American Boats, Not Just Canadian

By Tom Blackwell

[National Post \(CAN\)](#), July 5, 2018

U.S. border officials have not been deliberately "harassing" Canadian fishing boats in disputed Atlantic waters — agents have boarded numerous American vessels, too, as part of an unprecedented recent operation, says a prominent Maine lobsterman.

John Drouin said his and his two sons' boats and those of other American fishermen have all been stopped in the past couple of months by U.S. Border Patrol vessels, something he's rarely seen in 40 years plying the waters.

"It baffles me just as much as anybody else," said Drouin, a member of Maine's lobster advisory council. "I have no clue why they're here, spending taxpayers' money and resources ... (But) for whatever reason, they now have a presence."

I asked him what they're up to and they said, 'We're just documenting who's in the area'

His revelations called into question complaints from Canadians that they are being targeted by American law enforcement in a marine "grey zone" that both countries claim as sovereign territory.

Even so, Drouin said that a Canadian Coast Guard ship appeared in the zone in recent days, an apparent response to the U.S. actions.

A border patrol spokesperson said Thursday the agency has been conducting enforcement operations within

American water boundaries for "decades," calling them a vital part of immigration and national security efforts.

In the Houlton sector that includes the disputed waters around Machias Seal Island, agents have stopped and interviewed 21 Canadian boats in the 2018 fiscal year, and will continue to conduct such operations, the spokesperson said.

None of those interventions resulted in any immigration arrests, she said, adding that the patrol also participated in two sea rescues.

Meanwhile, Drouin charges that the chief problem in the disputed area is not the border patrol, but the Canadian government's lack of management of the fishery there. The result, he claimed, is a virtual fishing free-for-all that Drouin suspects is meant to push Canadian dominance in the zone.

He also said that Canadian government aircraft have rattled Maine fishermen in the past by "buzzing" their boats and taking photographs.

The long-standing dispute over the waters came to the fore again this week after a Facebook post described how a Grand Manan lobster fisherman was stopped by the border patrol in the grey zone late last month.

Rick Doucet, New Brunswick's fisheries minister, said he had been told about "heavily armed" border patrol agents boarding Canadian boats looking for illegal immigrants, and called the actions "overkill." Canadian fishermen are being "harassed," he charged.

Global Affairs Canada — describing the area as Canadian territory — said this week it is investigating the incidents.

But Drouin said he is among many American fishermen also stopped by the border patrol in May and June. In fact, he said the officers appear unfamiliar with the marine world and would almost certainly be unable to distinguish between Canadian and U.S. vessels.

The agents who stopped him asked if they could come aboard, then requested identification papers.

"I asked him what they're up to and they said, 'We're just documenting who's in the area,' " recalled Drouin. "They said that's what our directive is."

But Drouin said the bigger issue is Canadian use of the zone. While fisheries in most of Atlantic Canada have closed seasons to protect fish and shellfish stocks, the federal government allows Canadian fishermen to work in the disputed waters all but three days of the year, he alleged.

The Americans do not have closed seasons, but manage the resources through stricter limits on the size of lobster they can catch, said Drouin. The number of Canadian boats in the zone is also increasing, he charged.

The Grand Manan Fishermen's Association was unavailable for comment Thursday, and Drouin's claims could not be independently verified.

He said he sees it all as a way for Canada to assert its sovereignty over Machias Seal Island and the surrounding waters, with the two countries' fishing fleets caught in between.

"We're being used as pawns; we're being pitted against each other."

MS-13 Member Among Immigrants Arrested Near Laredo

[San Antonio Express-News](#), July 5, 2018

An MS-13 gang member was among a group of six undocumented immigrants who were arrested Tuesday by Border Patrol near Laredo.

The immigrants were taken to the Laredo Sector Centralized Processing Unit, where a background check revealed one individual, an El Salvadoran national, had an extensive criminal history and was identified as a member of the Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13, gang.

He was processed accordingly for his illegal re-entry into the United States.

"The men and women of the United States Border Patrol work daily to ensure that our communities are kept safe by disrupting and deterring illicit activity throughout our border," said Laredo Sector Acting Deputy Chief Patrol Agent Anthony S. Good.

All persons apprehended by Border Patrol undergo criminal history checks using multiple databases, including the use of biometrics to ensure those with a criminal history are identified regardless of their immigration status.

Tucson Border Patrol Agents Rescue Teen Girl From Smugglers In Arivaca

By Shaq Davis

[Arizona Daily Star](#), July 5, 2018

A 13-year-old Guatemalan girl was rescued from smugglers by Border Patrol agents following a 24-hour search southwest of Tucson on Monday.

Agents arrested a 62-year-old man for human smuggling after finding the girl's brother, a child and a woman during an inspection at the Arivaca Road Immigration Checkpoint.

While the group was being processed, agents learned the 13-year-old girl was separated from the group and left with smugglers at a residence in Arivaca, a news release said.

Agents combed the area before finding her in good health at a home with a 24-year-old man, who was also illegally in the country. She was taken to Tucson for further processing.

"The girl and her brother, now in the U.S. Border Patrol's care, were able to speak with their mother residing in

the United States, who expressed relief that her children were safe," the agency said.

Border Authorities Find Invasive Beetles In Bag Of Seeds

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

ROMULUS, Mich. (AP) – A woman traveling from Iraq to a Detroit-area airport was found to be carrying seeds infested with an invasive beetle.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection says in a release Thursday that agriculture specialists discovered the Khapra beetles Nov. 23 at Detroit Metropolitan Airport in Romulus. They were in a bag of seeds the woman planned to sow in her garden.

The Khapra beetle is considered one of the world's most destructive pests for stored grains, cereals and seeds.

The Associated Press sent an email Thursday to border officials asking if the woman was fined or charged.

Khapra beetles were found in January at Washington Dulles International Airport in rice brought from Saudi Arabia and in February at Baltimore Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport in cow peas brought from Nigeria.

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AVIATION SECURITY

TSA-Approved Ways To Shorten The Airport Screening Line

By Gregory Karp

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

The summer air travel season is shaping up to be the busiest ever, which could mean lengthy lines at U.S. airport security checkpoints. But you can use the faster lanes if you belong to an expedited screening program, which could essentially be free to join with the right credit card.

The primary federal programs for air travel, TSA Precheck and Global Entry, cost \$85 or \$100 per traveler, respectively, and enrollment lasts five years for both.

Both give you access to the Transportation Security Administration's Precheck security lanes at over 200 domestic airports, where wait times as of May were less than five minutes for 92 percent of passengers, according to TSA. Global Entry includes TSA Precheck privileges and adds expedited entry through U.S. customs when you return from a foreign country.

'IF YOU USE IT, YOU DON'T WANT TO GO BACK'

Faster security lanes could help reduce stress this summer as a record 243 million passengers and crew members are projected to pass through airport security checkpoints nationwide from Memorial Day to Labor Day,

according to the TSA. That total is up from 239 million last year.

"Frequent travelers place great value on Precheck and Global Entry," says Henry Harteveltdt, a travel industry analyst at Atmosphere Research Group. About 91 percent of business airline travelers said expedited airport screening was important to them, according to a 2017 survey by Harteveltdt's group.

Joe Brancatelli, a business travel writer and founder of travel site JoeSentMe.com, calls both programs a breeze to use. "If you use it, you don't want to go back," he said.

Leisure travelers will have to decide whether they fly often enough to justify the cost and effort to apply. For example, if you take two round-trip domestic flights each year, Precheck's cost will average \$4.25 per flight.

Here's how to know whether Precheck or Global Entry is right for you and how a credit card might be able to defray the cost.

WHICH TO CHOOSE

With both programs, you provide personal information and submit to a background check. In exchange you get a trusted traveler number, which you can use for faster screening.

Global Entry might be the obvious choice for frequent and international travelers because it comes with more benefits for a little extra money, costing an average of \$3 more annually than Precheck.

The downside of Global Entry comes upfront: It's a bigger hassle to apply for, and it requires a more thorough background process than Precheck. It not only requires a passport but also an in-person interview, which is available at the nation's large international airports and border crossings.

If you rarely travel abroad, don't have a passport and don't live near a Global Entry center, TSA Precheck may be the better option.

Application details are on the TSA Precheck and Global Entry websites.

BENEFITS OF PRECHECK

TSA Precheck status gives you access to security lanes with lighter screening. To use the special lane, make sure your trusted traveler number is included in your airline itinerary. Leave on your belt and shoes, keep your laptop in its case, and let liquids and gels remain in your carry-on. Dedicated Precheck lanes and quicker screening usually mean faster-moving lines. Children ages 12 and younger can use Precheck lanes when traveling with a parent or guardian who has the Precheck indicator on their boarding pass.

BENEFITS OF GLOBAL ENTRY

Global Entry, run by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, includes TSA Precheck benefits and expedited customs screening when traveling internationally. When returning to the U.S., you can use a self-service kiosk instead of waiting in customs lines. The program also includes

expedited processing at Mexico and Canada border crossings. Children of all ages need their own Global Entry status to use expedited customs screening.

HOW YOUR CREDIT CARD CAN HELP

More credit cards that earn travel rewards are starting to add a valuable benefit: reimbursement of the application fee for Precheck or Global Entry once every four or five years. Typically, reimbursement is automatic when you use the travel credit card to pay the \$85 or \$100 fee.

For card issuers, the benefit is becoming a must, especially for travel credit cards with hefty annual fees. "If you want to market your card as an elite one and charge a high fee, you better offer this rebate as part of the bundle of benefits," Brancatelli says.

OTHER ADVICE

If neither program is right for you, TSA offers these tips for regular security lanes:

- Before heading to the airport, check your carry-ons for prohibited items.

- During busy travel periods, TSA recommends using its app, MyTSA, to check what your wait time might be.

- When packing your carry-on, keep in mind that some items will need to be removed and scanned separately.

This article was provided to The Associated Press by the personal finance website NerdWallet. Gregory Karp is a writer at NerdWallet.

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Fingerprinting Squabbles Hold Up TSA's Precheck Expansion

A daily speed read on transportation and infrastructure

By Stephanie Beasley

[Politico Morning Transportation](#), July 5, 2018

STARTING BACK AT SQUARE ONE: Agreeing there's a problem is usually the start to resolving it. And when it comes to increasing TSA's Precheck enrollment numbers, most seem to agree that the agency could get more people to participate if they didn't have to travel to enrollment centers. But that's pretty much where the agreement ends. TSA's Precheck enrollment services partner, IDEMIA (formerly MorphoTrust), wants Congress to do away with federal rules requiring in-person appointments. That could open up the possibility of using mobile technologies like facial recognition to enroll people via phones and laptops, Charlie Carroll, the company's vice president of enrollment services, told your MT host. But the company hasn't backtracked on its opposition to a Senate committee-approved bill, S. 1872 (115), that travel and airport groups said could open opportunities for even more mobile options by allowing Precheck applicants to be

vetted through means other than biometrics like fingerprinting. IDEMIA is currently TSA's sole Precheck enrollment services vendor.

State of play: The back-and-forth continues as TSA faces what could be its busiest summer on record — one that Rep. John Katko (R-N.Y.) warned could turn into a replay of 2016 when the agency overestimated the number of travelers using Precheck lanes, which contributed to persistently long wait times and scores of missed flights. TSA has consistently said that it would eventually like to have around 25 million travelers enrolled in Precheck. Chris McLaughlin, TSA's former top security official, said it's an achievable goal, but one that will require the agency to rethink its marketing strategy. Meanwhile, the U.S. Travel Association said a top priority should be getting multiple vendors for the program.

WE'RE BACK, AND IT'S STILL HOT: Thanks for tuning in to POLITICO's Morning Transportation, your daily tipsheet on all things trains, planes, automobiles and ports. Hopefully, you had a fun and safe holiday. Send tips, scoops and song requests to @Steph_Beasley or sbeasley@politico.com.

This is for my ladies in the 280s Mercedes / In the H3, baby Ranges, Bentley Coupes, my Escalades / Say oh, oh / Break 'em off somethin' proper / Like a real show stopper / This is for my chicas with the Beamers A6s / 67 Chevy's, Maserati, or a Lexus / Say oh, oh

LISTEN HERE: Follow MT's playlist on Spotify. What better way to start your day than with songs (picked by us and readers) about roads, rails, rivers and runways?

SQUEEZE ME TIGHT: If you're reading this as you board a plane home from your July Fourth holiday, hoping against all odds that you don't have to sit in the middle seat next to a manspreader... well, you're reading this in what some might call a tight spot. That's because the FAA is not planning to set minimum standards for seat size and spacing — at least not any time soon, the agency said earlier this week regarding a rulemaking petition to which a federal court last summer required a more detailed response.

The skinny: Consumer advocacy group Flyers Rights petitioned FAA to write such a rule in 2015, arguing that the increasing girth of plane passengers coupled with shrinking seat sizes led to a safety hazard, both with respect to evacuation procedures and customers' health. But FAA hit back that there's no evidence current seats hinder the ability of flyers (no matter the size) to evacuate a plane in case of emergency. Our Lauren Gardner has more.

Not taking a seat: In a joint statement Tuesday, Democratic Sens. Richard Blumenthal and Ed Markey blasted the agency's decision. "The incredible shrinking airline seat is more than an inconvenience, it can pose a serious threat to the health and safety of passengers. The FAA's stunning failure to act in the public interest here is yet one more reason why Congress must pass an Airline Passengers' Bill of Rights immediately," the statement said.

The airline passenger legislation, which the duo authored, would require FAA to assess and set a minimum seat size, among other safety provisions.

WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THESE UNIFORMS: President Donald Trump seems to have already moved past his Space Force idea and is now considering establishing something that's more like a Coast Guard for space — a Space Guard, if you will. Pro Defense's Bryan Bender writes that "Trump wants a standalone branch of the military — coequal to the Army, Navy and Air Force — to ensure 'dominance in space' and deter nations such as Russia and China from threatening America's reliance on space technologies for defense and commerce." Some civilian and military strategists are backing the idea, saying it could push the Coast Guard to "the next frontier."

WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU: FMCSA has rejected a call for some small businesses to receive a yearslong exemption from the electronic logging device mandate, the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association said Tuesday. "We are puzzled and disappointed at the response from the agency," the group's executive vice president, Todd Spencer, said in a statement. "For months, the FMCSA has been granting exemptions to other organizations, some not even actually in trucking, but relying on trucks for their businesses." OOIDA has registered concerns related to cybersecurity as well as the costs of ELDs and their certification.

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS: Democrats are worried the Trump administration is trying to wiggle out of providing federal funding for transit projects after the FTA sent out a letter last week saying Capital Investment Grant applicants would be required to show they have nonfederal, local funding for their projects to qualify, Bloomberg Government reports. House Appropriations Transportation-HUD Subcommittee ranking member Rep. David Price (D-N.C.) told BGov that it was part of the administration's plan to "scuttle" the Gateway Project in New York that could "cause collateral damage to vital transit projects across the country."

PRECIOUS CARGO: At least 21 children have died from heatstroke in hot cars this year and another 43 died last year, KidsAndCars.org said in an advisory Tuesday to warn those traveling with kids to check the back seat of their vehicles every time they park and before they exit. "We always see an increase in child injuries and deaths around holidays," Janette Fennell, the group's president, said. "Parents and caregivers have the power to make sure that this doesn't happen to them."

'THAT'S ACTUALLY A STRENGTH, NOT A WEAKNESS': Chris Liddell, a former General Motors executive now serving as White House deputy chief of staff, is facing "a nearly impossible task," our colleagues Andrew Restuccia and Nancy Cook report: bringing Trump's policy shop under control. Critics of Liddell say his inexperience in

policy isn't helping, nor is his unwillingness "to play the much-needed role of enforcer or bad guy." But his backers claim that a "lack of deep policy chops makes him the right person for the job at this heated moment because he does not favor one ideological viewpoint over another." Check out the full story here.

TV LAND: The Waterways Council, Inc., tells us they worked with HBO on a recent episode of VICE, called "The Big Fix," that focuses on waterways as well as the Gateway Project in New York. "[O]ne thing to note in the segment is the interview with Daniel Sloane, who served as an infrastructure transition team adviser to the Trump administration, and who was the creator of the original list of key infrastructure projects that was leaked in early 2017," WCI Senior Vice President Debra Calhoun noted.

AND SOME RECESS WEEK LISTENING: Former FRA chief Sarah Feinberg discusses her time as press secretary for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee during the 2006 midterms for an episode of "How to Flip the House," a Washington Post podcast series hosted by MT alum Martine Powers. Martine tells us it's an entertaining listen for anyone familiar with Feinberg. Oh, and she talks about getting yelled at by Rahm Emanuel.

SPECIAL DELIVERY: Sarah Feldman, communications director for Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), and Emily Loeb, a partner at Jenner & Block, welcomed Henry David Loeb. (h/t POLITICO Playbook)

THE AUTOBAHN:

— "Elon Musk ordered Tesla engineers to stop doing a critical brake test on Model 3s." Business Insider.

— "It's hot. It's rainy. And waiting for a bus in Miami is still a miserable experience." The Miami Herald.

— Op-ed: "Meet the future of urban transportation: the bus." The Wall Street Journal.

— "F4A in Senate aviation bill yet to gain floor debate." Transport Topics.

— "Wichita police buy drone and navigate public privacy concerns." The Drive.

THE COUNTDOWN: DOT appropriations run out in 88 days. The FAA reauthorization expires in 88 days. Highway and transit policy is up for renewal in 819 days.

JFK Terminal Evacuated Temporarily After Bomb-sniffing Dog Spots Suspicious Bag

By Thomas Tracy

[New York Daily News](#), July 5, 2018

The Port Authority Police Department temporarily evacuated part of a JFK Terminal Thursday after a dog trained to identify explosives got a bad whiff from an unattended bag, officials said.

The Transportation Security Administration canine reacted to a smell from the bag at a screening point on the

south side of Terminal 5 about 2:40 p.m. Terminal 5 contains all flights run by JetBlue, officials said.

The Port Authority Police Department ordered the south side of the terminal and a departure roadway evacuated as a precaution while the NYPD Bomb Squad was called in to investigate. They found nothing dangerous inside.

Airport operations quickly returned to normal, a Port Authority spokeswoman said.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

Trump: Get Illegal Immigrants 'OUT' Of America's 'Front Lawn'

By Judson Berger

[Fox News](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump on Thursday renewed his call to overhaul the deportation system so that illegal border crossers are swiftly sent back to their home countries and not processed by the immigration courts, likening the situation to stopping an intruder "on your front lawn."

"Tell the people 'OUT,' and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn. Hiring thousands of 'judges' does not work and is not acceptable – only Country in the World that does this!" Trump tweeted.

He followed up with a message to Congress: "FIX OUR INSANE IMMIGRATION LAWS NOW!"

It was the latest in a series of sometimes-conflicting messages from the president on how Congress should address illegal immigration.

He suggested weeks ago that Republicans wait until after the November elections to take up the issue, but then urged the House to pass a sweeping Republican-authored immigration and border security overhaul. After it failed, Trump claimed over the weekend – on Twitter, the same social media forum he used to urge passage of the bill – that he "never pushed the Republicans in the House" to vote for it because it couldn't pass in the Senate. He again called to elect more Republicans.

On Thursday morning, he returned to calling on Congress to act in the near-term.

"Congress must pass smart, fast and reasonable Immigration Laws now. Law Enforcement at the Border is doing a great job, but the laws they are forced to work with are insane. When people, with or without children, enter our Country, they must be told to leave without our ... Country being forced to endure a long and costly trial," he tweeted.

The tweets reflect an ever-changing – and always-challenging – legislative landscape on immigration. Democrats have hammered the Trump administration over the practice of separating families caught crossing the border illegally, as a result of "zero-tolerance" policies. Trump has

moved to end that practice, but the controversy has complicated any chance of passing legislation.

Trump, meanwhile, has repeatedly suggested as he did Thursday that the federal government should institute a practice of simply sending border crossers back instead of using immigration judges to process their cases. Such calls have led to accusations that this would be wrongly denying due process.

Trump Compares Border Enforcement To Keeping People Off ‘Your Front Lawn’

By Rafael Bernal

[The Hill](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump on Thursday tweeted that Congress must pass immigration laws that would allow U.S. authorities to summarily kick out would-be immigrants “just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn.”

In three tweets, Trump called U.S. immigration laws “insane,” railed against the potential hiring of more immigration judges, said the United States is the “only Country in the World that does this,” and praised law enforcement at the border.

Congress must pass smart, fast and reasonable Immigration Laws now. Law Enforcement at the Border is doing a great job, but the laws they are forced to work with are insane. When people, with or without children, enter our Country, they must be told to leave without our.....— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

.....Country being forced to endure a long and costly trial. Tell the people “OUT,” and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn. Hiring thousands of “judges” does not work and is not acceptable – only Country in the World that does this!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

Congress – FIX OUR INSANE IMMIGRATION LAWS NOW!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

Trump’s call for immigration reform comes as the House last month failed to pass two GOP proposals to replace the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Trump initially asked Republicans to pass one of the bills, but later backtracked and said he “never pushed Republicans in the House to vote for the Immigration Bill.”

Border apprehensions this spring rose to around-average seasonal numbers for the past five years, just as Attorney General Jeff Sessions implemented a “zero tolerance” policy on illegal border crossings.

That policy sparked backlash from lawmakers on both sides of the aisle as more than 2,000 children were separated from their parents by U.S. authorities at the border, including separating some children from parents that were seeking asylum.

Trump gave in and signed an executive order to end the family separations, but the administration is now fighting in court for the right to indefinitely detain families until their immigration cases are heard. Right now, the law states that children can only be held for 20 days, making the process of reuniting them with their parents murky.

Migrants who cross the border legally or illegally can make a claim for asylum if they prove a credible fear of going back to their home countries.

Those claims must be first evaluated by the apprehending officer and then taken up by an immigration court, a process that in some cases can take years.

Most of the families who have crossed the border this year are from Central America, which prevents authorities from immediately turning them back once they’re apprehended at the border.

Citizens of Canada and Mexico — contiguous countries — can be summarily taken to points of entry and returned to their home countries as soon as they’re caught by the Border Patrol.

In his tweets, Trump seemed to be suggesting the same regulations apply to citizens of other countries, saying that the U.S. should be able to deport without “being forced to endure a long and costly trial.”

Trump has also previously expressed resistance to the idea of hiring more immigration judges — actually administrative employees of the Department of Justice — to more quickly process asylum claims and other immigration cases.

“Ultimately, we have to have a real border, not judges,” Trump said last month.

Trump Urges Quick Action On Immigration, Changing Course Once Again

By John Wagner

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump on Thursday urged Congress to “FIX OUR INSANE IMMIGRATION LAWS NOW” — the latest in an oscillating series of directives about how quickly lawmakers should move on an issue that has fractured Republican lawmakers.

The president’s new plea came in tweets in which he also renewed his call to deprive undocumented immigrants of their due-process rights before ejecting them from the United States.

“Tell the people ‘OUT,’ and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn,” Trump wrote.

As moderate and conservative House Republicans have struggled in recent weeks to coalesce around immigration legislation, Trump has been inconsistent in his exhortations.

Two weeks ago, as GOP leaders were seeking to build support for a relatively moderate bill, Trump said on Twitter that Republicans “should stop wasting their time” on immigration until after the midterm elections, when, he predicted, more GOP lawmakers would be elected.

The House nevertheless pressed forward with a vote on the bill that would have funded Trump’s border wall, offered young undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship and partially addressed the family-separation crisis at the southwest border.

Hours before the vote, Trump took to Twitter, writing in all capital letters that House Republicans “SHOULD PASS” the bill. Later that afternoon, the legislation was soundly defeated, 301 to 121.

A few days later, Trump falsely claimed on Twitter that he had “never pushed the Republicans in the House to vote for the Immigration Bill,” citing the challenge of rounding up enough votes in a closely divided Senate in which Democrats could filibuster the legislation.

On Thursday, Trump was back to urging quick passage of what he called “smart, fast and reasonable Immigration Laws.”

“Law Enforcement at the Border is doing a great job, but the laws they are forced to work with are insane,” he said.

Trump also renewed an argument made late last month that people who cross the border into the United States illegally should immediately be deported without trial or an appearance before a judge.

“Hiring thousands of ‘judges’ does not work and is not acceptable – only Country in the World that does this!” Trump said.

It remains unclear whether immigration legislation of any kind will be up for congressional consideration before the elections in November.

Congress must pass smart, fast and reasonable Immigration Laws now. Law Enforcement at the Border is doing a great job, but the laws they are forced to work with are insane. When people, with or without children, enter our Country, they must be told to leave without our.....— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

.....Country being forced to endure a long and costly trial. Tell the people “OUT,” and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn. Hiring thousands of “judges” does not work and is not acceptable – only Country in the World that does this!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

Congress – FIX OUR INSANE IMMIGRATION LAWS NOW!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

Trump Reiterates Demand To Deport Undocumented Immigrants, Asylum-seekers Without Due Process

By Louis Nelson

[Politico](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump demanded on Thursday that Congress pass laws allowing undocumented immigrants and asylum-seekers to be deported without due process, which he characterized as a “long and costly” process that the U.S. is foolish to carry out.

“Congress must pass smart, fast and reasonable Immigration Laws now. Law Enforcement at the Border is doing a great job, but the laws they are forced to work with are insane,” the president wrote on Twitter Thursday morning in a pair of posts. “When people, with or without children, enter our Country, they must be told to leave without our country being forced to endure a long and costly trial.”

“Tell the people ‘OUT,’ and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn,” he continued. “Hiring thousands of ‘judges’ does not work and is not acceptable – only Country in the World that does this!”

In a third tweet, the president called America’s immigration laws “insane” and issued an all-caps call for Congress to fix them “NOW!”

The president’s immigration policies, long a point of contention with his critics, have drawn extra scrutiny in recent weeks amid the controversy over the Trump administration’s policy of referring all illegal border-crossers for prosecution, a practice which resulted in the separation of thousands of children from their parents.

After initially, and falsely, insisting that the separations could only be ended by Congress, Trump signed an executive order last month ending the practice. It remains unclear how quickly separated families are being reunited.

Even after the president’s executive order, protesters marched last weekend in Washington and around the country in opposition to the administration’s immigration policy, which critics have lambasted as heartless.

Trump, though, has complained that immigrants take advantage of U.S. immigration laws, which he has characterized as being overly generous and riddled with loopholes. He has publicly rejected the idea of hiring additional immigration judges, the officials who oversee asylum and deportation hearings, in favor of laws that would remove undocumented immigrants without a hearing.

Trump Tells Congress: Our Immigration Laws Are Insane, Fix Them

By Katie Pavlich

[Townhall](#), July 5, 2018

Fresh off of the Independence Day, mid-week holiday, President Trump is wasting no time demanding Congress get back to work to fix what he says are “insane” immigration laws.

The tweet storm comes two weeks after the president signed an executive order ending the separation of illegal alien adults from children in detention centers.

"We're signing an executive order. I consider it to be a very important executive order. It's about keeping families together while at the same time being sure that we have a very powerful, very strong border, and border security will be equal if not greater than previously," Trump said at the White House, flanked by Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. "We're going to have strong, very strong borders, but we're going to keep the families together. I didn't like the sight or the feeling of families being separated."

Adults and children are now being detained together, but can only be held for 20 days before they are required by federal law to be released into the United States. They are also given an immigration court date and the majority fail to show up. This effectively restores catch and release. The zero tolerance policy of prosecuting everyone who enters the country illegally still stands.

Meanwhile, a number of Democrats and their leftist allies are calling for the abolishment of ICE and claim entering the United States illegally should not be a crime.

US To Reunite Migrant Families As Immigration Politics Boil

By Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

WASHINGTON (AP) – Stung by a public outcry, the Trump administration said Thursday it will meet court-ordered deadlines for reuniting families separated at the border, even as the politics of immigration remained at a boil.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar told reporters that his department is ready to reunite children in its care with their parents, starting next Tuesday with those under age 5. HHS said it's using DNA testing as a backup to confirm the parent-child link and speed up the process.

However, Azar warned that entire families may remain in the custody of immigration authorities for extended periods, even those who are claiming asylum. Before the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy, migrants seeking asylum under U.S. laws were often granted temporary release as their cases were resolved.

Azar also used a new and much higher number for migrant kids separated from their parents, "under 3,000" as compared with the figure of 2,047 he provided at a Senate hearing last week. Of those, about 100 are under five years old.

He said the new number reflected a more thorough look by HHS at its case files, and over a longer time period, to comply with the court order that families be reunited. That order had been issued after his Senate testimony.

Nonetheless, Azar's effort to provide a more accurate accounting only seemed to create more confusion.

HHS has long been charged with caring for unaccompanied minors crossing the border, thousands of children every year. Usually, the agency places kids with a U.S. relative or foster family while their immigration cases are decided. This year, HHS also took on the role of caring for children separated from their parents as a consequence of the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy.

Azar said the new number reflects a case-by-case audit of about 11,800 migrant children in its care, over a longer time frame. About 80 percent of those children arrived unaccompanied at the border, and many are teenage boys.

Azar said the audit was done to make sure the agency was in full compliance with a court order issued after he had given senators a lower number.

U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw in San Diego has ordered the youngest children reunited by Tuesday of next week, and the rest before the end this month. A court hearing on the administration's efforts and plans is scheduled for tomorrow.

Azar called the deadlines "extreme" but said HHS will comply after an extensive effort to identify children in its shelters who were separated from their parents, to confirm parentage, and to screen parents for criminal violations or other problems that could result in harm to kids.

"While I know there has been talk of confusion, any confusion is due to a breakdown in our immigration system and court orders. It's not here," Azar said, adding that migrant children are being well cared for in HHS facilities.

Once HHS reunifies the families, they will be in the custody of the Department of Homeland Security, Azar said. DHS has already started moving some parents to facilities closer to facilities where their children are being kept.

Azar said his department has more than 230 people working on just trying to match children with their parents.

DNA testing is being used as a backup to speed up matches if problems arise with paper documentation, said Jonathan White of the HHS Administration for Children and Families. It's done by swabbing the inside of the cheek of parent and child and sending the results to a lab for comparison.

Although White said DNA will only be used for reuniting families and genetic fingerprints will remain confidential, advocates for migrant families were concerned about intrusiveness.

"This is potentially extremely harmful in aggregating a database of DNA that people are somehow directed to provide in order to simply see their children," said Jonathan Ryan, executive director of the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services, a Texas nonprofit.

Shortly before Azar spoke, President Donald Trump took to Twitter, showing no signs of backing away from “zero tolerance.”

Only recently, the president had told Republicans in Congress to stop wasting their time on immigration until after November’s elections, but now Trump is insisting that Congress “FIX OUR INSANE IMMIGRATION LAWS NOW!”

The tweets seemed to carry an ominous message for border crossers.

“When people, with or without children, enter our Country, they must be told to leave without our,” Trump wrote. “Tell the people “OUT,” and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn.”

Congress has been unable to advance major immigration legislation going back to the George W. Bush years. Republicans are divided among hardliners and business-oriented moderates who don’t see immigration as a threat. Democrats want a path to citizenship for people living in the country illegally, which many Republicans deride as “amnesty.”

Associated Press writers Colleen Long and Martha Mendoza contributed to this report.

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California Barred From Enforcing Parts Of Sanctuary Laws

By Kartikay Mehrotra

[Bloomberg News](#), July 5, 2018

Private employers in California must comply with federal orders seeking information about immigrant employees, a judge ruled, partly rejecting the state’s sanctuary laws.

U.S. District Court Judge John Mendez approved the Justice Department’s request for a preliminary injunction against sections of the Immigrant Worker Protection Act. The judge denied the U.S.’s request to stop California from enforcing laws that bar local police from complying with federal directives and authorize the state attorney general to inspect privately owned federal detention centers.

Mendez’s opinion, which he concedes will likely be appealed, pitted the unofficial nexus of the Trump resistance against the president over the state’s autonomy to enforce laws to protect undocumented immigrants. The order follows a day-long hearing on June 20 in Sacramento where attorneys for California and the Justice Department argued over what U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions described as “extreme” laws that disrupt the country’s constitutional order.

Mendez went out of his way to ensure his order wouldn’t be perceived as a political opinion.

“This order hopefully will not be viewed through a political lens and this court expresses no views on the soundness of the policies or statutes involved in this lawsuit,” Mendez said in his written order. “There is no place for politics in our judicial system and this one opinion will neither define nor solve the complicated immigration issues currently facing our nation.”

Federal Judge Denies Trump Administration Effort To Block California’s ‘Sanctuary’ Law

By John Myers

[Los Angeles Times](#), July 5, 2018

A federal judge refused Thursday to block California from restricting local law enforcement cooperation with immigration agents, an early legal victory for the state’s “sanctuary” law.

U.S. District Judge John A. Mendez, in rejecting the position of the Trump administration that California’s law is an attempt to stymie immigration enforcement, wrote that “refusing to help is not the same as impeding.”

“Standing aside does not equate to standing in the way,” Mendez wrote.

The judge also upheld the legality of a second California law, allowing the state’s attorney general to visit federal immigration detention centers. He rejected part of a third state law — one which imposes fines on private business employers who voluntarily allow immigration agents into the workplace.

Mendez heard arguments from federal and state attorneys on June 20 in a Sacramento courtroom. The judge said at the time that given the high-profile nature of the case, he expected his ruling would ultimately be appealed.

The marquee law of the three statutes that were challenged, Senate Bill 54, has eliminated much of the discretionary power that local law enforcement previously had to privately share information with federal immigration agents about people who have been arrested and put in county jails. Attorneys for the U.S. Department of Justice argued last month that the state had no right to interfere with the enforcement of immigration law.

But Mendez’s ruling said because Congress had not explicitly required state or local cooperation, the Trump administration could not block what was otherwise the cancellation of a voluntary effort.

“SB 54 does not add or subtract any rights or restrictions upon immigrants,” the judge wrote. “Immigrants subject to removal remain subject to removal. SB 54, instead, directs the activities of state law enforcement, which Congress has not purported to regulate.”

The bill’s author, state Sen. Kevin de León (D-Los Angeles), said the ruling is an affirmation that California lawmakers carefully crafted the statute.

"We made it very clear that we're not interfering in the functions of immigration authorities to execute their job," he said.

Nor did the judge find any legal justification for blocking Assembly Bill 103, a law that opens nine detention centers in California to inspection by state officials.

One law, however, was seen as going too far. Mendez ruled that Assembly Bill 450, which forbids business owners from voluntarily allowing federal agents to inspect their work sites, should not have also imposed fines of up to \$2,000 on employers. He wrote that federal immigration law doesn't allow "additional penalties on employers" beyond those imposed by Congress.

"These fines inflict a burden on those employers who acquiesce in a federal investigation but not on those who do not," Mendez wrote.

Judge Rules For California Over Trump In Sanctuary Law Case

By Thomas Fuller

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

SAN FRANCISCO — A federal judge in California on Thursday denied a request by the Trump administration to suspend California's so-called sanctuary policies that limit cooperation between federal immigration authorities and state and local law enforcement.

In a decision praised by opponents of the Trump administration's immigration policies, Judge John A. Mendez of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California ruled that the state's decision not to assist in federal immigration enforcement was not an "obstacle."

"Standing aside does not equate to standing in the way," the judge wrote in a 60-page ruling that was at times impassioned.

Judge Mendez described the case as presenting "unique and novel" questions about the balance in the country between state and federal powers.

"The Court must answer the complicated question of where the United States' enumerated power over immigration ends and California's reserved police power begins," the judge said.

He urged Congress to find a "long-term solution" to federal immigration policy — "to set aside the partisan and polarizing politics dominating the current immigration debate and work in a cooperative and bipartisan fashion toward drafting and passing legislation that addresses this critical political issue."

"Our Nation deserves it," the judge wrote. "Our Constitution demands it."

Judge Mendez was nominated to the court by President George W. Bush in 2007.

Although he denied the federal government's attempt to suspend California's sanctuary policies, he granted the Trump administration an injunction on the more narrow point of a provision in California's labor law that limits an employer's ability to reverify an employee's eligibility for a job.

This specific section of California's labor law "appears to stand as an obstacle" to the federal government's effort to ensure that employees are legal immigrants.

But he left open the possibility that the court could change its ruling on this point when more evidence is presented "at a later stage of this litigation."

In a statement, a spokesman for the Justice Department, Devin O'Malley, said the ruling on labor law was a "major victory for private employers in California who are no longer prevented from cooperating with legitimate enforcement of our nation's immigration laws."

But Mr. O'Malley said he was "disappointed" in the judge's rejection of the injunction on the state's sanctuary laws. The Justice Department, he said, "will continue to seek out and fight unjust policies that threaten public safety."

Opponents of the Trump administration's immigration policies heralded the ruling as a victory. "California is under no obligation to assist Trump tear families apart," Kevin de León, who is running for senator in November's election, said in a statement. "We cannot stop his meanspirited immigration policies, but we don't have to help him, and we won't."

Lawyers for the Trump administration had argued that California lacked the authority to "intentionally interfere" with local governments' voluntary cooperation with federal immigration officials.

California's lawyers responded by saying the state had "acted squarely within its constitutional authority" and that the sanctuary laws did not undermine the federal government's authority to enforce immigration laws.

Trump administration officials have been emphatic that the state's sanctuary policies are violations of the federal immigration law. Soon after filing legal action against California over the sanctuary laws in March, Attorney General Jeff Sessions traveled to Sacramento, the state capital, to rail against state officials whom he accused of using "every power the legislature has to undermine the duly established immigration laws of America."

Judge Blocks 1 California Sanctuary Law, Allows 2 Others

By Sudhin Thanawala, Don Thompson

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California can limit police cooperation with immigration officials and require inspections of detention facilities but can't enforce a key part of a third state sanctuary law barring private employers from allowing

immigration officials on their premises without a warrant, a U.S. judge ruled Thursday.

The decision came in a lawsuit filed against the state by the Trump administration seeking to block all three laws.

In an unusual move for a federal judge, John Mendez ended his opinion with pleas that it not be viewed through a “political lens,” and that Congress and the president set aside “the partisan and polarizing politics dominating the current immigration debate” to address the issue.

“There is no place for politics in our judicial system, and this one opinion will neither define nor solve the complicated immigration issues currently facing our nation,” Mendez, who was nominated to the federal bench by Republican President George W. Bush, wrote in his opinion dated July 4.

Mendez’s mixed ruling allowed both sides to claim victory.

“Today the federal court issued a strong ruling against federal government overreach,” California Attorney General Xavier Becerra said in a statement. “The Constitution gives the people of California, not the Trump administration, the power to decide how we will provide for our public safety and general welfare.”

The U.S. Department of Justice said it was disappointed that two of the laws were “not yet halted,” but it called the ruling on the third law a “major victory for private employers in California who are no longer prevented from cooperating with legitimate enforcement of our nation’s immigration laws.”

The agency “will continue to seek out and fight unjust policies that threaten public safety,” DOJ spokesman Devin O’Malley said in a statement.

The administration filed suit in March to block the laws, continuing its efforts to crackdown on so-called sanctuary jurisdictions that it says allow criminals to stay on the streets.

California has resisted the administration’s effort to restrict funding to sanctuary jurisdictions if they refuse to help federal agents detain and deport immigrants. Overall, the state has sued the administration more than 50 times, mostly over immigration and environmental decisions.

The lawsuit considered by Mendez argued that the U.S. Constitution gives the federal government pre-eminent power to regulate immigration, and California can’t obstruct enforcement efforts.

California said in court documents that the administration was trying to assume powers that have long been understood to belong to states and could not show that California’s policies were causing harm.

Passage of the three laws followed President Donald Trump’s promises to ramp up deportations.

Mendez said in Thursday’s ruling that the federal government’s request for a preliminary injunction presented “unique and novel constitutional issues.”

“Deciding these critical issues requires this court to determine the proper balance between the twin powers of California and the United States,” he wrote.

The law requiring inspections of detention facilities where immigrants are held did not “impose any substantive requirements upon detention facilities,” the judge said.

“For all its bark, the law has no real bite,” he wrote.

The measure preventing law enforcement from providing release dates and personal information of jail inmates – information administration officials say they need to safely remove dangerous people who are in the country illegally – is not an obstacle to federal immigration enforcement efforts, Mendez said.

The judge said “refusing to help is not the same as impeding.”

But subjecting employers to monetary penalties solely because they allow immigration agents into their places of business or give them access to employment records discriminates against those who choose to deal with the federal government, the judge said.

Mendez also blocked another part of that law that prohibited employers from checking whether existing employees are authorized to work in the U.S. He left in place, however, a provision requiring employers to notify workers within 72 hours of receiving a notice of inspection from an immigration enforcement agency.

The state had asked Mendez to dismiss the lawsuit, which Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown has described as akin to the U.S. “going to war” against California.

The judge did not immediately rule on that request.

Thanawala reported from San Francisco.

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Judge Largely Rejects Trump Bid To Block California Sanctuary Laws

By Josh Gerstein And Ted Hesson

[Politico](#), July 5, 2018

A federal judge on Thursday rejected the bulk of a Trump administration demand to block three California sanctuary laws, allowing the state to keep in place its most significant legislative measures aimed at countering President Donald Trump’s crackdown on illegal immigration.

Sacramento-based U.S. District Court Judge John Mendez rejected, for now, the Justice Department’s drive to halt a California law that limits the kinds of immigration-related information state and local law enforcement can share with federal officials. The judge also declined DOJ’s request to block another law guaranteeing California officials certain

information about local and privately run jails that hold immigration detainees in the Golden State.

While the ruling is a setback for the Trump administration's attempt to enforce immigration laws in states where leaders favor more liberal policies, Mendez did block parts of one of the disputed California laws, including provisions that banned private employers from voluntarily cooperating with immigration officials and from re-verifying the legal work status of employees.

Mendez, an appointee of President George W. Bush, took a narrow view of state and local governments' obligations to allow their employees to assist federal immigration officials. He said California had broad authority to limit use of its resources for immigration enforcement.

"Refusing to help is not the same as impeding," wrote Mendez. "Federal objectives will always be furthered if states offer to assist federal efforts. A state's decision not to assist in those activities will always make the federal object more difficult to attain than it would be otherwise. Standing aside does not equate to standing in the way."

Justice Department lawyers argued that a 1996 federal law prevents California from blocking disclosure of information helpful to immigration authorities, such as prisoners' expected release dates and their home addresses. But Mendez said that law covers only records "strictly pertaining to immigration status" and not a broader set of data.

Mendez's decision denied a preliminary injunction against the most significant provisions the Justice Department challenged in a suit filed with fanfare last March. The ruling doesn't eliminate the possibility that the federal government could prevail in more aspects of the suit in the future, but it leaves the administration without much of the immediate relief it wanted.

A Justice Department spokesman had no immediate comment on the decision.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, whose office defended the laws, hailed the ruling.

"The right of states to determine how to provide public safety and general welfare to their people continues to stand strong," Becerra said in a statement.

The author of the law limiting information-sharing with federal officials, California state Sen. Kevin De León, tied the judge's decision to the outcry over Trump's move to separate some immigrant parents from their children.

"Today, a federal judge made clear what I've known all along, that SB 54, the California Values Act is constitutional and does not conflict with federal law," De León said. "California is under no obligation to assist Trump tear apart families. We cannot stop his mean-spirited immigration policies, but we don't have to help him, and we won't."

Mendez said he hoped his ruling would be seen as a legal one, not a political one, and he said "piecemeal

opinions" from judge will not resolve hot-button immigration debates.

"This Order hopefully will not be viewed through a political lens and this Court expresses no views on the soundness of the policies or statutes involved in this lawsuit. There is no place for politics in our judicial system and this one opinion will neither define nor solve the complicated immigration issues currently facing our Nation," wrote the judge, who added that he ruled "without concern for any possible political consequences."

The judge closed his opinion with a strong exhortation to Congress and the White House to enact legislation addressing the most contentious disputes relating to immigration policy.

"This Court joins the ever-growing chorus of Federal Judges in urging our elected officials to set aside the partisan and polarizing politics dominating the current immigration debate and work in a cooperative and bi-partisan fashion toward drafting and passing legislation that addresses this critical political issue," Mendez wrote. "Our Nation deserves it. Our Constitution demands it."

Christopher Cadelago contributed to this report.

Federal Judge Largely Rebuffs Justice Dept. Bid To Block California's 'sanctuary' Laws

By Matt Zaptosky

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

A federal judge on Thursday mostly rejected a bid by the Justice Department to block California's "sanctuary state" laws, which enact policies friendly to undocumented immigrants.

In a 60-page ruling, U.S. District Judge John A. Mendez said most of the laws, which limit how state businesses and law enforcement agencies can work with federal immigration authorities, are "permissible exercises of California's sovereign power."

The judge said California was within its rights to allow state authorities to inspect immigrant detention facilities, and to bar state law enforcement agencies from providing release dates or other personal information to federal immigration authorities. He blocked portions of one law which imposed heavy fines on businesses that gave immigration authorities access to their facilities and records without a court order.

[Justice Dept. sues California over 'sanctuary' laws that aid those in U.S. illegally]

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra (D) hailed the decision as "a strong ruling against federal government overreach."

"The Constitution gives the people of California, not the Trump administration, the power to decide how we will provide for our public safety and general welfare," he said.

"California's laws work in concert — not conflict — with federal law."

Justice Department spokesman Devin O'Malley, meanwhile, said the judge stopping the state from fining employers who cooperated with immigration authorities was "a major victory for private employers in California."

"While we are disappointed that California's other laws designed to protect criminal aliens were not yet halted, the Justice Department will continue to seek out and fight unjust policies that threaten public safety," O'Malley said.

The Justice Department had filed a suit to block the California sanctuary laws in March, arguing that the measures obstructed enforcement of federal law and harmed public safety. They took aim specifically at three bills, which allowed for state review of immigrant detention facilities; restricted the information state law enforcement could share with immigration authorities; and imposed the fines on employers and required them to give notice of immigration inspection.

Mendez blocked three sections of the latter bill — though not the one having to do with providing notice — after finding that they "impermissibly infringed on the sovereignty of the United States."

"The Court finds that a law which imposes monetary penalties on an employer solely because that employer voluntarily consents to federal immigration enforcement's entry into nonpublic areas of their place of business or access to their employment records impermissibly discriminates against those who choose to deal with the Federal Government," Mendez wrote.

Mendez, though, was skeptical of the government's arguments about the other laws. While the federal government might like California to help more in cracking down on illegal immigration, he said it was "entirely reasonable" for state leaders to have determined that "assisting immigration enforcement in any way, even in purportedly passive ways like releasing information and transferring custody, is a detrimental use of state law enforcement resources."

The state, he said, was not blocking immigration enforcement by not offering to help.

"Standing aside does not equate to standing in the way," Mendez wrote.

Mendez wrote that he had reached his decision "without concern for any possible political consequences," which he said was "a luxury, of course, that members of the other two branches of government do not share." He concluded with a plea to the legislative and executive branches to "set aside the partisan and polarizing politics dominating the current immigration debate and work in a cooperative and bipartisan fashion toward drafting and passing legislation that addresses this critical political issue."

"Our Nation deserves it," he wrote. "Our Constitution demands it."

Judge Largely Rules For California In 'Sanctuary State' Fight

By Tom Hals

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Federal Judge Largely Rejects Admin Attempt To Block California Immigration Laws

By David Shortell

[CNN](#), July 5, 2018

(CNN)A federal judge in California largely rejected an effort by the Trump administration to block a spate of immigration laws in the state in a ruling issued Thursday, dealing a setback to the Justice Department in its offensive against "sanctuary city" policies.

In an opinion, Judge John Mendez, a George W. Bush appointee, turned down Justice Department demands to stop the 2017 California laws that prevented state law enforcement from sharing information about the release of criminal immigrants to federal agents and that prohibited their transfer to federal custody. Mendez also ruled that a plan for state inspection of detention facilities holding noncitizens for civil immigration proceedings, which included the review of certain federal immigration documents, could move forward for now, as well as a new labor code that required private employers to give workers advance notice of potential worksite inspections.

Mendez did, however, block California from carrying out other sections of the new laws, including prohibiting private employers from voluntarily allowing immigration authorities to enter nonpublic areas of their workplaces. Mendez also granted the government's request to block a section of the California law limiting an employer's ability to reverify the legal work status of an employee.

In a statement, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra called the opinion a "strong ruling against federal government overreach."

"The Constitution gives the people of California, not the Trump Administration, the power to decide how we will provide for our public safety and general welfare. California's laws work in concert — not conflict — with federal law," Becerra said.

California passed the laws last year in what officials hailed as a rebuke of President Donald Trump's aggressive immigration enforcement agenda.

In a statement, Justice Department spokesman Devin O'Malley hailed the preliminary injunction on the law that

stopped private employers from cooperating with immigration authorities as a “major victory,” but expressed disappointment in the bulk of the ruling.

“While we are disappointed that California’s other laws designed to protect criminal aliens were not yet halted, the Justice Department will continue to seek out and fight unjust policies that threaten public safety,” O’Malley said.

Closing out his 60-page opinion, Mendez implored Congress and the White House to come up with solutions to “the problems our country faces with respect to immigration policy,” writing that one “cannot and will not come from piecemeal opinions issued by the judicial branch.”

“Accordingly, this Court joins the ever-growing chorus of Federal Judges in urging our elected officials to set aside the partisan and polarizing politics dominating the current immigration debate and work in a cooperative and bi-partisan fashion toward drafting and passing legislation that addresses this critical political issue. Our Nation deserves it. Our Constitution demands it,” Mendez wrote.

CNN’s Marc Rod contributed to this report.

CA Sanctuary State Law Wins First Court Battle Over Trump

By Taryn Luna

[Sacramento \(CA\) Bee](#), July 5, 2018

A federal judge on Wednesday denied the Trump administration’s request to immediately halt California’s sanctuary state law.

U.S. District Judge John A. Mendez issued a 60-page ruling nearly two weeks after lawyers for the federal government and the state faced off in court during a daylong hearing. The Trump administration asked the judge for an injunction against Senate Bill 54, which limits the ability of state and local law enforcement to help federal agents enforce immigration law, and two other state laws as the federal government’s lawsuit against the state makes its way through the court system.

“Plaintiff’s argument that SB 54 makes immigration enforcement far more burdensome begs the question: more burdensome than what?” Mendez wrote in his July 4 ruling. “The laws make enforcement more burdensome than it would be if state and local law enforcement provided immigration officers with their assistance. But refusing to help is not the same as impeding.”

Mendez denied the request to halt Senate Bill 54 and Assembly Bill 103, which allows the California attorney general to inspect detention facilities in the state. SIGN UP

He approved the Trump administration’s request to temporarily prevent the state from requiring private employers to deny federal immigration authorities access to nonpublic areas of a worksite or employee records without a warrant under an Assembly bill.

The judge said AB 450 places employers in a “precarious situation.”

“The Court finds that a law which imposes monetary penalties on an employer solely because that employer voluntarily consents to federal immigration enforcement’s entry into nonpublic areas of their place of business or access to their employment records impermissibly discriminates against those who choose to deal with the federal government,” Mendez wrote.

He upheld a portion of AB 450 that requires companies to inform workers of any federal requests to inspect employment records within 72 hours.

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions traveled to California and announced the federal lawsuit against the state’s immigration policies in March. The laws were enacted to protect immigrant workers and prevent the Trump administration from seeking the state’s help to ramp up deportations.

“Today, a federal judge made clear what I’ve known all along, that SB 54, the California Values Act is constitutional and does not conflict with federal law,” said Kevin de León, the state lawmaker who introduced the sanctuary state law. “California is under no obligation to assist Trump tear apart families. We cannot stop his mean-spirited immigration policies, but we don’t have to help him, and we won’t.”

The injunction ruling serves as the first legal test of California’s sanctuary state law and an early indicator of the Trump administration’s odds of winning the lawsuit

Mendez, nominated to the bench by former President George W. Bush in 2007, said the motion for an injunction presented “unique and novel constitutional issues.” He said he reached his ruling after careful analysis of legal precedents and “without concern for any possible political consequences.” Mendez stressed that piecemeal judicial rulings will not solve problems with the immigration system.

“Accordingly, this court joins the ever-growing chorus of federal Judges in urging our elected officials to set aside the partisan and polarizing politics dominating the current immigration debate and work in a cooperative and bi-partisan fashion toward drafting and passing legislation that addresses this critical political issue,” Mendez wrote. “Our nation deserves it. Our constitution demands it.”

47 New U.S. Citizens Take Oath In Hammond During Annual Exercise

By Sue Ellen Ross

[Northwest Indiana Post-Tribune](#), July 5, 2018

The City of Hammond’s annual Fourth of July Naturalization Ceremony, which began more than 40 years ago, welcomed 47 new citizens Wednesday at the Wolf Lake Pavilion.

"We are a nation of immigrants," said Hammond Common Council President Janet Venecz, D-At large, as she welcomed the crowd. "The United States is a group of all races, religions and ethnicities."

More than 200 audience members watched the formal proceedings supervised by U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge Andrew Rodovich.

The messages of welcoming, hope for the future, recognition of what it took for those that chose the path to legal citizenship — as well as the responsibilities that come along with it — were repeated by the five speakers: Justin Mount, representing U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly, D-Ind.; Chris Salatas, representing U.S. Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind.; Mark Lopez, representing U.S. Rep. Peter Visclosky, D-Gary; John Halstead of the Indiana Bar Association; and Valparaiso University law professor Rosalie Levinson. Levinson also served as last year's keynote speaker.

Levinson related her family's personal experience of coming to America after the Holocaust, which was a perfect example of the American dream, she said.

"My father came here with nothing, built a successful business, and sent all his children to college," she added. "And he never forgot the wonderful country that gave him the opportunity to do this."

Chaoming Guo of Crown Point watched his wife, Bilin Lin, take the Oath of Citizenship. The couple hails from China.

"She has been here three years and is very excited to become a citizen," Guo said. "Later on, in maybe a few years, I'll be doing the same thing."

Another supportive spouse in the audience was Josh Banks of Granger, Ind.

His wife, Lily Banks, came to America eight years ago from Taiwan.

"Lily wanted to get more involved with today's issues," Josh said. "So, one way she could do this was to make it (citizenship) official."

Rodovich acknowledged that the road to U.S. citizenship does not have the same timeline for everyone.

The procedure includes many areas, such as becoming familiar with the customs, laws and language of the United States — as well as providing good moral character, among other items on the checklist.

"The United States is the greatest country in the world and worth all your efforts," Rodovich told the soon-to-be new citizens. "We are the only country founded on 'an idea', and that idea is liberty."

Ten years ago, Nicolas Nieto arrived in Crown Point from Bogota, Columbia.

His wife, Jime Nieto, and their three children proudly watched as he repeated the Oath of Citizenship with the others on the stage of the pavilion.

"We love this country, that's why we're here," Jime said. "This is where we want to stay."

During the ceremony, Rodovich urged the new citizens to register to vote. The League of Women Voters (LWVA) of the Calumet Area was there to assist with this request after the ceremony ended.

"The most heartwarming part of this event is when they (new citizens) rush to our table to register," said LWVA member Susan Duncan. "I see so many happy faces."

Sue Ellen Ross a freelance reporter for the Post-Tribune.

New Citizens Taking Oath In Hammond Are Urged To Exercise Their New Duties Of Combating Bigotry

By Bob Kasarda

[Times of Northwest Indiana](#), July 5, 2018

HAMMOND — Harvey Ndalama said he has been working to become a United States citizen for 15 years.

"Finally, it's here," he said Wednesday night while waiting to check in along with 47 people from 19 countries taking part in the annual Fourth of July Naturalization Ceremony held this year at The Pavilion at Wolf Lake Memorial Park in Hammond.

The South Bend resident said he made the decision to pursue citizenship shortly after arriving in this country from Malawi in southeast Africa in 2001 to attend school in New Mexico. He now works in manufacturing.

"You got to like the area," he said. "You got to like the country."

The naturalization process is neither easy nor quick.

"It takes forever," he said laughing.

But the day finally came for Ndalama and the others, and he felt the timing with the holiday was special.

"It couldn't be more patriotic," he said.

While a few of the ceremonies are timed with patriotic holidays, more than 600 naturalization ceremonies are performed every month across the nation, including two ceremonies almost every weekday at the Chicago regional office, said Genevieve V. Billia, public affairs officer at the Chicago Field Office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

"All citizen candidates must participate in a naturalization ceremony, as a key factor of the ceremony is the Oath of Allegiance and the receipt of the new citizen's naturalization certificate," she said.

Citizenship is beneficial to both individuals and the nation, Billia said.

"Research indicates that citizenship plays a direct role in successfully integrating immigrants into American society," she said. "Shared citizenship creates a sense of belonging and guarantees many important benefits, including equal

treatment and protection under the law and the right to vote, among other benefits. Naturalized citizens enjoy nearly the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as U.S.-born citizens."

Those who took the oath Wednesday joined more than 7.4 million naturalized citizens welcomed into the country over the past decade, including 752,800 in fiscal year 2016 alone, according to the USCIS.

During 2016, the top countries of origin for naturalization were in the following order: Mexico, India, Philippines, People's Republic of China and Cuba, according to USCIS. At the same time, 73 percent of all people naturalizing resided in 10 states in the order of California, New York, Florida, Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, Massachusetts, Washington, Virginia and Maryland.

Path to citizenship for the undocumented

The scene Wednesday at Wolf Lake was much more serene and upbeat than many of the images in the news recently involving the hot button issue of immigration.

On Saturday, an estimated 300 people braved scorching heat in Hammond to join other communities across the country in protesting President Donald Trump's immigration policies while demanding federal authorities safely reunite children separated from their families at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Under Trump's "zero tolerance policy" that criminally prosecuted all adults caught crossing the border illegally over the last two months, thousands of parents seeking asylum were separated from their children. Many of the children were placed into detainment camps.

There is a misunderstanding that undocumented immigrants have done something wrong and are thus ineligible for citizenship, according to Alfredo Estrada, an immigration attorney with the Merrillville law firm of Burke, Costanza & Carberry.

There are many different paths to citizenship through naturalization and among them is a route for undocumented individuals, defined as those who did not check in at the border when crossing over or who have overstayed the time allowed on a visa, he said.

The undocumented immigrants who are married to a U.S. citizen or who are the child of a U.S. citizen have more avenues of relief, he said, though they still need to prove their deportation would create an extreme hardship for their relative in this country.

Those who come to this country seeking asylum also have a path to naturalization, he said.

The path to naturalization is not easy, cheap or quick, he said. And the wait became much longer as a result of a surge in applicants that came as Trump was being sworn into office without a corresponding growth in government workers to process the applications.

New citizens urged to fight bigotry

Rosalie Levinson, senior research professor at the Valparaiso University School of Law, welcomed the new citizens Wednesday and shared how her parents had immigrated to the United States in 1947 after witnessing many of their closest family members killed as part of the Holocaust.

She said her parents fled a country where laws were non-existent and where they did not even enjoy the right to stay alive.

"Now they would breathe free," Levinson said.

She pointed out two duties of citizenship to the group, including harboring no prejudice and respecting the rights and opinions of others.

Levinson said there may some among the group who fled injustice just like the majority of the ancestors of those already in this country. She spoke about nations failing to welcome immigrants and called on the group to fight against the current wave of bigotry and xenophobia polluting the world today.

By speaking out, protesting and voting, she told the group they can uphold the values symbolized by the Statue of Liberty that welcomed her parents 70 years ago.

Local Canadian Completes Her 7-year Journey Toward American Citizenship

[Warren \(PA\) Times-Observer](#), July 5, 2018

Glenna Peterson said farewell to Canada after being sworn in as an American citizen.

Glenna has lived in Chandler's Valley with her husband, John, for the past seven years.

Glenna and John met and fell in love while working as missionaries in Tanzania. After getting married and spending five years in Africa, they decided to settle down in the states.

After going through the process of getting her green card, Glenna decided this was the year she was going to apply for naturalization.

She has worked at the North Warren Lowe's for five years. She says she has really enjoyed becoming a part of the local community through her job and her and John's church in Chandler's Valley.

Friends and co-workers surprised her with an all-American picnic in her honor.

I asked Glenna; aside from falling in love with an American, what are some of the American values that drew her here.

"My green card grants almost all the rights of a citizen, but you can't vote in a federal election."

She lives here, works here and has for seven years.

"My green card would expire after 10 years and then I would have to renew it," said Peterson.

"Obtaining my citizenship makes me feel like I am more a part of it. This is my home now."

"I admire the patriotism of Americans," added Peterson, coincidentally one day prior to our nation's birthday.

"Canadians are patriotic, but we don't show it in quite the same way. I like the way Americans wear it on their sleeve."

Omaha Journalist's Mother Celebrates Becoming US Citizen

By Rachel Swan

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A Vietnamese woman who lived apart from her daughter for 18 years is celebrating receiving her U.S. citizenship in Nebraska.

Tu Tran, 62, became a naturalized citizen last week, the Omaha World-Herald reported. She's the mother of Chinh Doan, a reporter at KETV in Omaha who spoke at the naturalization ceremony.

"It was extra-amazing and sentimental," Doan said. "I kept it together and didn't cry so people could understand the message. My parents sacrificed so much for me."

Tran's daughter and second husband moved to the U.S. in 1994 through an agreement that allowed former prisoners of war to emigrate to the U.S. following the Vietnam War. But Tran had to stay behind because she didn't have a death certificate for her first husband, a South Vietnamese soldier believed to have drowned at sea. That cast doubt on the legality of her second marriage, to an army officer who was imprisoned for nearly a decade and met Tu in 1985 after his release.

Tran's family moved to Oklahoma City. Doan became a U.S. citizen and enrolled at the University of Oklahoma. She worked with Oklahoma politicians to bring her mother to the U.S. in time for her college graduation. University of Oklahoma President David Boren, a former Oklahoma governor and U.S. senator, reached out to his son, then-Rep. Dan Boren.

Doan was only able to visit her mother six times during the nearly two-decade long separation. Doan's seventh trip to Vietnam in 2012 was so she could accompany her mother, who'd never flown before, on an airplane to the U.S.

"The American dream exists," Doan said, "and will continue to thrive if we all continue to believe in it."

Doan and Tran now live together in Omaha.

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Coming To America: 15 Become U.S. Citizens

By Doug Ponder

[Hardin County \(KY\) News-Enterprise](#), July 6, 2018

More than a dozen people from 11 countries became United States citizens last week at the birthplace of one of the greatest presidents.

The Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park hosted its first Naturalization Ceremony on June 28. Superintendent Jay Grass said 15 people from 11 countries became citizens at the ceremony.

"The process to become citizens took individuals anywhere from 5 to 17 years," Grass said. "The petitioners came from a wide variety of countries including Canada, Philippines, Cuba, Mexico, Iran, Iraq, South Korea, Nepal and Peru."

Grass hosted the ceremony and the guest speakers were LaRue County Judge-Executive Tommy Turner and Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes.

Turner said it was the first naturalization ceremony he attended and that it was a moving experience.

"We take for granted the importance of being a U.S. citizen," he said. "Yet it's probably the most coveted title that many on earth desire. I talked about being a citizen and the responsibility of citizenship with my talk being intertwined with Lincoln, his views and how he was the example to follow."

The ceremony was a collaborative, organized event from the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service and the U.S. National Park Service. Assistant U.S. Attorney Regina Edwards made the motion for admission of the petitioners for citizenship and United States Magistrate Judge Lanny King swore in the petitioners as they took their oath of allegiance to the U.S.

Grass said all of the newly sworn citizens currently live in Kentucky in Louisville or Bowling Green. The names of the new citizens were not released.

Grass added that they decorated for the ceremony throughout the park and that he was honored to have such a ceremony there.

He said the event was a formal and legal ceremony that was closed to the public, which is why they did not advertise or publicize the event until after it happened.

"The park was decorated in small 4- by 6-inch flags. The sidewalk to the Memorial Building alternated between a flag from one of the countries of origin and an American flag. Once the park's flag pole was reached, the sides of the steps were covered in nothing but American flags," Grass said. "The event was a great success and we hope to do more such ceremonies in the future. It was an honor to pay tribute and respect to President Lincoln's legacy on immigration by hosting this naturalization ceremony at the place of his birth."

Meet Sonoma's Newest Citizens

By Carole Kelleher

[Sonoma \(CA\) Index-Tribune](#), July 5, 2018

Pure joy. That was the look on the faces of the new United States citizens celebrating their hard-earned accomplishment at the La Luz Family Resource Center last week.

Almost just as joyful were the 22 volunteer teachers and tutors who conduct the free citizenship classes every Monday evening. They were thrilled for the 12 new citizens and for the four others who have completed their classes this year and are waiting for the date of their naturalization examination to arrive.

A red, white and blue American flag sheet cake with the words "Congratulations" and "Felicitaciones" capped the potluck feast that included tamales, pizza and fried chicken. Proud spouses and happy children celebrated with the new citizens and their teachers.

Everyone who passed the citizenship exam was presented an award certificate and a long-stem red rose by Betzy Chavez, the director of the family resource center. "The process is so difficult," she said, but explained that if you study and prepare you will pass the test. She said the La Luz students go in nervous and come out having passed because they are so well prepared.

"Those of you who have not done it, continue to push forward, and get others to do it, too," Chavez said.

Etelvina Rendon passed the exam on June 8, despite suffering severe headaches caused by being so nervous about learning all the necessary information. "I am so happy now," she said. "It was mucho stress." She has lived in Sonoma for 24 years and four of her five children were born here and attended El Verano Elementary where the evening citizenship classes are taught. She attended class with her teacher Dotty Abbot for a year and then spent another year being tutored by Dick Drew.

"My husband and my children encouraged me. They told me, 'you can do it!'" she said.

Carmen Garcia was sworn in as a U.S. citizen on June 7, and she was extra-happy because her mother and her husband became citizens on the same day. She has lived in Sonoma for 18 years and her three children were born here. "I am so excited," she said. Her tutor, Kathy Bloch, was smiling beside her at the party. "She is an excellent student. I had no doubt she would pass," Bloch said.

La Luz founder Ligia Booker started the classes four years ago and is still one of the teachers. "We love it," she said at the party, expressing the enthusiasm she and the other volunteers share. "They do it from the heart."

To be eligible for the class you must be a legal permanent resident, which means you have a green card. If you have a green card you can apply for citizenship after you have been a U.S. resident for five years, or three years if you are married to a citizen.

The wait from application until the date of examination is currently about 18 months, and there is a \$750 fee. The verbal exam is in English and consists of a potential 100 civics questions, 10 of which are asked and six must be answered correctly. You must also be able to read and write a sentence in English. (There is an exception for longtime

legal residents over 55 who are allowed to take the test in Spanish.)

The Recorder – Fourth Of July Rite Of Passage Celebrates 58 New Americans

By Dusty Christensen

[Greenfield \(MA\) Recorder](#), July 5, 2018

It took Carmen Quiroz more than 18 difficult years to become a U.S. citizen after immigrating from Ecuador. But that process was worth the wait as she walked in front of a large crowd, miniature American flag in hand, to collect her certificate of citizenship on Wednesday.

"So excited," Quiroz said when asked what her emotions were. "I became part of the United States!"

Quiroz was one of 58 immigrants who were sworn in as U.S. citizens in a downtown ceremony organized by the Center for New Americans. This year marked a decade since the center began organizing naturalization ceremonies in Northampton. Represented at this year's ceremony were 33 different countries, from Mexico and Canada to Bangladesh and Bhutan.

"Getting to help people through the citizenship process reminds me every day of the gifts and talents immigrants bring to this country," Tina Sanchez, the Center for New Americans' citizenship associate, said prior to the event. "Each person has a powerful story and I feel lucky to share a little in each of their lives."

One of those powerful stories is that of Adriana Sarsynski, 61, who came to the United States from Colombia five years ago.

"I came here in 2013 because I fell in love with an American guy," she said with a beaming smile, nodding to her husband, Mike Sarsynski.

Sarsynski first received her green card after marrying in 2013, and has since become a certified health care interpreter, a profession that is in demand in hospitals.

"Becoming a U.S. citizen is special," Laurie Millman, executive director of the Center for New Americans, told the crowd. "Becoming a U.S. citizen on the Fourth of July is extra special."

An estimated 400 people turned up for the event on the grounds of the Hampshire County Courthouse, a larger turnout than in previous years.

"We hear a lot about the greatness of our country, and whether it's great and if it's still great," Northampton Mayor David Narkewicz said, looking out over those about to become citizens. "To me, this is the greatness of our country."

The ceremony, as in previous years, featured local singer Evelyn Harris performing several patriotic songs. She drew loud applause when, during her version of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," she replaced the lyric "land of the pilgrims' pride" with the line "land of the natives' pride."

The 58 local immigrants stood as they took the Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America, as immigrants have done for some 220 years.

"That's it, you're now American citizens!" U.S. Magistrate Katherine Robertson, who presided over the ceremony, told the group. "Congratulations to all of you."

As the ceremony ended, Kool and the Gang's "Celebration" blasted over the speakers and some began to dance as the bass-heavy music filled downtown Northampton.

Swaying to the music were Rene and Rena Owusu Agyapomaa, of Ghana. The 25-year-old twin sisters were all smiles, bouncing between conversations with reporters, their mother and two other sisters.

"So ecstatic!" were Rene's only words when asked her feelings.

Those, too, were the emotions that Emily Henry, of the Philippines, after the ceremony. The 34-year-old was celebrating with her 7-year-old son, John Henry Kazar. She said that as she walked up to receive her certificate, she thought about all of those in America who had helped her get to where she is now.

"I said, 'Thank God I'm now a part of this country, and I'm happy to have a new family,'" she said of her thoughts as she became a citizen. "Welcome to the land of the free."

Statue Of Liberty Climber Pleads Not Guilty After Immigration Protest

By Diana Kruzman

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Statue Of Liberty Protester Is Immigrant Active In Resisting Trump Policy

By Doug Stanglin

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

A woman arrested after scaling lower parts of the Statue of Liberty in a dramatic July 4th protest is a native of the Democratic Republic of the Congo who has been active in the resistance movement against Trump administration immigration policies, according to media reports.

A federal official identified her as Therese Okoumou. The official was not authorized to discuss the incident and spoke to the Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

Okoumou had hoisted herself up the robes of the statue to protest the separation of immigrant children from parents who cross the U.S.-Mexico border illegally, she told police.

The activist, identified by The Daily News as a personal trainer by profession, was arrested and charged with federal trespassing, disorderly conduct and other charges.

Okoumou, 44, of Staten Island, has lived in New York for at least the last 10 years, The Daily News reports, citing official records.

She recently joined the protest group Rise and Resist, which earlier Wednesday had unfurled an "Abolish ICE" banner at the base of the statue, targeting the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

ICE, a division of the Department of Homeland Security, has been the key agency in the arrest and deportation of unauthorized immigrants inside the U.S.

Seven members of Rise and Resist were charged earlier Wednesday with violating federal laws against hanging banners from the monument, Jerry Willis, a spokesman with the National Park Service, told USA TODAY.

Jay Walker, one member of Rise and Resist, tells The Daily News that climbing the statue was not part of the group's protest plan and that Okoumou apparently decided to do that on her own.

The New York-based group opposes President Donald Trump's administration and advocates ending deportations and family separations at the U.S.-Mexico border.

New York cops with ropes and ladders scaled up a portion of the statue to coax her down on live TV. She can be seen traversing the base of the statue and sitting in the folds of the statue's dress and under Lady Liberty's sandal.

Willis said the national monument was closed out of "an abundance of caution" following both incidents. Tourists were loaded on boats off the island and no new boats headed for the island, he said.

In February 2017, someone hung a banner reading "Refugees Welcome" from the observation deck. The sign was taken down about an hour after being discovered.

A year earlier, a West Virginia man with psychological problems was sentenced to time served after calling in a bomb threat. His call forced the evacuation of Liberty Island, sending 3,200 people on boats back to Lower Manhattan and New Jersey.

The statue, a gift from France, was dedicated in 1886. It became a welcoming symbol for immigrants and refugees coming to the U.S.

Contributing: The Associated Press

Separating Immigrant Children From Their Parents Is Child Abuse

By Dr. Rebekah Diamond

[The Hill](#), July 5, 2018

Like so many, we as pediatricians continue to be horrified and heartbroken by headlines of children separated from their families. While it seems impossible to keep up with policy statements and revisions that confuse and distract, one thing remains clear: Innocent children have been stripped

senselessly from their parents, and the path to end this inhumanity remains tragically unclear.

The American Academy of Pediatrics continues to support all children and has issued a strong statement in opposition of the injustice that has and continues to occur. AAP leadership states that “Detention of children is not a solution to the forced separation of children from their parents at the U.S. border...The AAP urges the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice to immediately end the policy of family separation. Separating children from their parents contradicts everything we stand for as pediatricians — protecting and promoting children’s health.

This sentiment cannot be reiterated strongly enough: Pediatricians stand unanimously in support of all children, and oppose any and all practices that result in the separation of families.

We know that the trauma suffered from separation from one’s parents is the greatest, longest lasting stressor possible for a child of any age. In fact, removing children from their parents, even into temporary custody, is considered so damaging that it is always viewed as a last resort even in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

Furthermore, the psychological damage suffered from this toxic stress has been shown to have serious and long-lasting effects. In recent studies, data from tens of thousands of individuals revealed that exposure to adverse childhood events greatly increases the risk for long-term physical, mental and behavioral issues.

Pediatricians see this daily in our practice-children whose parents have passed away, who have had parents deported or incarcerated, or who have even had temporary separation from their parental support all face a devastating series of often permanent emotional and even physical impairments.

The reality of what these children go through, which we see daily in our hospitals and offices, is truly heartbreaking. While we work tirelessly to mitigate this trauma to the best of our abilities, we wish deeply that we could have done something to prevent this, and wonder how we can prevent this suffering for other children.

The federal government recognizes that children must be protected from physical and psychological harm and already has a framework provided by legislation to define what constitutes abuse towards children.

The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) defines child abuse and neglect as “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”

A lengthy debate on how geographic place of birth relates to citizenship is not needed to recognize that the

current implementation of immigration policy lacks any grounding in basic humanistic standards.

In our current system, all health-care workers are considered mandated reporters and are required by law to report all suspected and confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect.

As a pediatrician, I write this to urge all fellow physicians and health-care workers to officially report the abuse of immigrant children at the border and demand the immediate reunification of all families. And as a mother, I implore all citizens to see beyond partisan lines and understand the simplicity of this issue: we cannot tolerate the abuse of innocent children.

Rebekah Diamond, MD, is a physician in pediatrics. She has written for the Slate, The Washington Examiner and The Detroit Free Press.

Trump Can’t Make America White Again

By Eugene Robinson

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

Racism is a feature of the Trump administration, not a bug. Like demagogues before him, President Trump and his aides consistently single out one group for scapegoating and persecution: nonwhite Hispanic immigrants.

Trump doesn’t much seem to like nonwhite newcomers from anywhere, in truth — remember how he once expressed a fond wish for more immigrants from Norway? — but he displays an especially vicious antipathy toward men, women and even children from Latin America. We have not seen such overt racism from a president since Woodrow Wilson imposed Jim Crow segregation in Washington and approvingly showed “The Birth of a Nation,” director D.W. Griffith’s epic celebration of the Ku Klux Klan, at the White House.

Trump encourages supporters to see the nation as beset by high levels of violent crime — and to blame the “animals” of the street gang MS-13. He is lying; crime rates nationwide are far lower than two or three decades ago, and some big cities are safer than they have been in a half-century. But Trump has to paint a dystopian panorama to justify the need to Make America Great Again.

MS-13 is, indeed, unspeakably violent. But it is small; law enforcement officials estimate the gang’s total U.S. membership at roughly 10,000, concentrated in a few metropolitan areas that have large populations of Central American immigrants — Los Angeles, New York and Washington. Trump never acknowledges that the gang was founded in the United States by immigrants from El Salvador and exported to Central America, where it took hold. He also neglects to mention that its members here, mostly teenagers, generally direct their violence at one another, not at outsiders.

Trump deliberately exaggerates the threat from MS-13 in order to justify his brutality toward Central American

asylum seekers at the border. People should never be treated that way, but “animals” are a different story.

It is unbelievable that the U.S. government would separate more than 2,300 children from their parents for no good reason other than to demonstrate cruelty. It is shocking that our government would expect toddlers and infants to represent themselves at formal immigration hearings. It is incredible that our government, forced to grudgingly end the policy, would charge desperate parents hundreds or thousands of dollars to be reunited with their children. It is appalling that our government would refuse even to give a full and updated accounting of how many children still have not been returned. Yet all of this has been done — in our name.

Trump uses words such as “invading” and “infest” and “breeding” to describe Central American migrants who arrive at the border lawfully seeking asylum. I’ll believe this is neutral immigration policy when Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents begin hunting down and locking up Norwegians who have overstayed their visas.

Said Norwegians, if anyone bothered to look for them, might well be taking jobs away from American workers or taking advantage of social-welfare programs or boosting crime rates. There is no evidence that asylumseekers are doing any of these things.

Trump’s policies flow from a worldview that he has never tried to hide. To describe Trump and aides such as Attorney General Jeff Sessions and senior policy adviser Stephen Miller as “anti-immigration” tells only part of the story. They adopt the stance of racial and cultural warriors, “defending” the United States against brown-skinned, Spanish-speaking hordes “invading” from the south.

Trump has proposed not just building a wall along the border with Mexico to halt the flow of undocumented migrants but also changing the system of legal immigration so that it no longer promotes family unification. He calls his aim a “merit-based” system, but Miller has specified that the administration wants to produce “more assimilation.”

Yet there is no evidence that immigrants from Latin America fail to assimilate in any way except one: They do not come to look like Trump’s mental image of “American,” which is basically the same as his mental image of “Norwegian.”

This is a story as old as the nation. German, Irish, Polish, Italian and other immigrant groups were once seen as irredeemably foreign and incapable of assimilating. The ethnic and racial mix of the country has changed before and is changing now.

Hispanics are by far the biggest minority group in the country, making up nearly 18 percent of the population; by 2060, the Census Bureau estimates, that share will rise to nearly 29 percent. Trump is punishing Central American mothers and babies because, try as he might, he can’t Make America White Again.

Immigration Top Issue For U.S. Voters, Economy A Close Second: Reuters/Ipsos Poll

By Maria Caspani

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

AP NewsBreak: US Army Quietly Discharging Immigrant Recruits

By Martha Mendoza, Garance Burke

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

SAN ANTONIO (AP) – Some immigrant U.S. Army reservists and recruits who enlisted in the military with a promised path to citizenship are being abruptly discharged, the Associated Press has learned.

The AP was unable to quantify how many men and women who enlisted through the special recruitment program have been booted from the Army, but immigration attorneys say they know of more than 40 who have been discharged or whose status has become questionable, jeopardizing their futures.

“It was my dream to serve in the military,” said reservist Lucas Calixto, a Brazilian immigrant who filed a lawsuit against the Army last week. “Since this country has been so good to me, I thought it was the least I could do to give back to my adopted country and serve in the United States military.”

Some of the service members say they were not told why they were being discharged. Others who pressed for answers said the Army informed them they’d been labeled as security risks because they have relatives abroad or because the Defense Department had not completed background checks on them.

Spokespeople for the Pentagon and the Army said that, due to the pending litigation, they were unable to explain the discharges or respond to questions about whether there have been policy changes in any of the military branches.

Eligible recruits are required to have legal status in the U.S., such as a student visa, before enlisting. More than 5,000 immigrants were recruited into the program in 2016, and an estimated 10,000 are currently serving. Most go the Army, but some also go to the other military branches.

To become citizens, the service members need an honorable service designation, which can come after even just a few days at boot camp. But the recently discharged service members have had their basic training delayed, so they can’t be naturalized.

Margaret Stock, an Alaska-based immigration attorney and a retired Army Reserve lieutenant colonel who helped create the immigrant recruitment program, said she’s been

inundated over the past several days by recruits who have been abruptly discharged.

All had signed enlistment contracts and taken an Army oath, Stock said. Many were reservists who had been attending unit drills, receiving pay and undergoing training, while others had been in a "delayed entry" program, she said.

"Immigrants have been serving in the Army since 1775," Stock said. "We wouldn't have won the revolution without immigrants. And we're not going to win the global war on terrorism today without immigrants."

Stock said the service members she's heard from had been told the Defense Department had not managed to put them through extensive background checks, which include CIA, FBI and National Intelligence Agency screenings and counterintelligence interviews. Therefore, by default, they do not meet the background check requirement.

"It's a vicious cycle," she said.

The AP interviewed Calixto and recruits from Pakistan and Iran, all of whom said they were devastated by their unexpected discharges.

"Now the great feeling I had when I enlisted is going down the drain," said Calixto, 28. "I don't understand why this is happening."

In hopes of undoing the discharge, he filed a lawsuit in Washington, D.C., last week alleging the Defense Department hadn't given him a chance to defend himself or appeal. He said he was given no specific grounds other than "personnel security."

Calixto, who lives in Massachusetts and came to the U.S. when he was 12, said in an email interview arranged through his attorney that he joined the Army out of patriotism.

In the suit, Calixto said he learned he was being kicked out soon after he was promoted to private second class.

The Pakistani service member who spoke to the AP said he learned in a phone call a few weeks ago that his military career was over.

"There were so many tears in my eyes that my hands couldn't move fast enough to wipe them away," he said. "I was devastated, because I love the U.S. and was so honored to be able to serve this great country."

He asked that his name be withheld because he fears he might be forced to return to Pakistan, where he could face danger as a former U.S. Army enlistee.

Portions of the 22-year-old's military file reviewed by the AP said he was so deeply loyal to the U.S. that his relationships with his family and fiancée in Pakistan would not make him a security threat. Nonetheless, the documents show the Army cited those foreign ties as a concern.

The man had enlisted in April 2016 anticipating he'd be a citizen within months, but faced a series of delays. He had been slated to ship out to basic training in January 2017, but that also was delayed.

An Iranian citizen who came to the U.S. for a graduate degree in engineering told the AP that he enlisted in the program hoping to gain medical training. He said he had felt proud that he was "pursuing everything legally and living an honorable life."

In recent weeks, he said, he learned that he'd been discharged.

"It's terrible because I put my life in the line for this country, but I feel like I'm being treated like trash," he said. "If I am not eligible to become a U.S. citizen, I am really scared to return to my country."

He spoke on condition of anonymity because of those fears.

It's unclear how the service members' discharges could affect their status as legal immigrants.

In a statement, the Defense Department said: "All service members (i.e. contracted recruits, active duty, Guard and Reserve) and those with an honorable discharge are protected from deportation."

However, immigration attorneys told the AP that many immigrants let go in recent weeks were an "uncharacterized discharge," neither dishonorable nor honorable.

The service members affected by the recent discharges all enlisted in recent years under a special program aimed at bringing medical specialists and fluent speakers of 44 sought-after languages into the military. The idea, according to the Defense Department, was to "recognize their contribution and sacrifice."

President George W. Bush ordered "expedited naturalization" for immigrant soldiers in 2002 in an effort to swell military ranks. Seven years later the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest program, known as MAVNI, became an official recruiting program.

It came under fire from conservatives when President Barack Obama added DACA recipients – young immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally – to the list of eligible enlistees. In response, the military layered on additional security clearances for recruits to pass before heading to boot camp.

The Trump Administration added even more hurdles, creating a backlog within the Defense Department. Last fall, hundreds of recruits still in the enlistment process had their contracts canceled. A few months later, the military suspended MAVNI.

Republican Congressman Andy Harris of Maryland, who has supported legislation to limit the program, told the AP that MAVNI was established by executive order and never properly authorized by Congress.

"Our military must prioritize enlisting American citizens, and restore the MAVNI program to its specialized, limited scope," he said.

Non-U.S. citizens have served in the military since the Revolutionary War, when Continental soldiers included Irish,

French and Germans. The U.S. recruited Filipino nationals to serve in the Navy in the 1940s, and worked to enlist Eastern Europeans in the military over the next decade, according to the Defense Department.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, nearly 110,000 members of the Armed Forces have gained citizenship by serving in the U.S. military, according to the Defense Department.

Many service members recruited through the program have proven to be exemplary. In 2012, then-Sgt. Saral K. Shrestha, originally from Nepal, was named U.S. Army Soldier of the Year.

In general, the immigrant recruits have been more cost-effective, outperforming their fellow soldiers in the areas of attrition, performance, education and promotions, according to a recently released review by the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit research institution.

The AP spoke with a 26-year-old woman from Dominica who said she proudly enlisted in the immigrant recruitment program in 2016 while earning her nursing degree. She said she drilled each month with her reserve unit, which gave her an award, and had been awaiting a date to start basic training.

But in March, she said she looked up her profile on an Army portal and saw that the section about her security eligibility was marked "loss of jurisdiction," with no further explanation. The next month, her attorney said she found the reservist's name listed as "unsuitable" on a spreadsheet created by the Defense Department.

The reservist, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of concerns about her legal standing, said she received additional paperwork last month that indicated her case is awaiting a final decision.

"I have always been a good soldier and have always done what they ask me to do," she said. "I got into debt when I joined the Army because I can't work legally but, financially, I can't survive anymore. I don't want to give up because I genuinely like being in the Army. But I don't know who to turn to."

In recent years, a group of attorneys have been fighting to keep their recruited immigrant clients eligible for naturalization as delays have mounted. Some have been successful, including nearly 50 recruits who were granted a type of temporary status while their background investigations are being completed.

"Some of our clients have finally emerged through the system and at least are doing basic training," said Donald Friedman, a Washington attorney with Perkins Coie.

Burke reported from San Francisco.

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More Veterans' Requests For Help On Immigration Are Rejected Now, Data Shows

By Tara Copp

[Military Times](#), July 5, 2018

As part of the Trump administration's crackdown on immigration, the government is rejecting more requests from veterans and their dependents for protection from deportation, according to new government data.

Last month U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services released previously unreported statistics on the numbers of active duty and veteran service members who were seeking deportation protections for a spouse or a dependent.

The data shows that rejections of veteran requests have increased under President Donald Trump, from about a 10 percent rejection rate in fiscal 2016, the last year President Barack Obama was in office, to an almost 20 percent rejection rate through the first nine months of fiscal 2018. Specifically:

In fiscal 2016, the Obama administration denied 140 veteran requests for deportation protection and approved 1,304 requests.

In fiscal 2017, the Trump administration denied 250 veteran requests for deportation protection and approved 1,449 requests.

In the first nine months of fiscal 2018, the Trump administration has denied 218 requests for deportation protection and approved 875 requests.

While the increase in rejections for the dependents of active members was not as steep, it still rose from slightly more than 11 percent in fiscal 2016 to about 14.5 percent to date in fiscal 2018.

The protections, known as Parole in Place, allow members of the military to petition the government to drop any removal proceedings against a spouse or dependent who entered the U.S. illegally. That action then allows that family member to seek an adjustment in his or her residency status without having to leave the country.

The ability to remain in the U.S. is a critical advantage because most other undocumented immigrants seeking legal residency in the U.S. must first depart the country and not return for years while going through the lengthy process of obtaining a visa. Parole in Place allows those military families to stay together.

Parole in Place requests from both active duty and veteran service members spiked 31 percent from the last year of the Obama administration to the first year of Trump's presidency, to 6,586 applications in 2017, as the new president directed the Department of Homeland Security to increase the number of deportations it processed. However most Parole in Place decisions take months or years to get approved and often are not decided in the same year as they are applied for.

Among active duty service members the spike in 2017 from the year before was 33 percent, and among veterans, 29 percent. Multiple active duty families have contacted Military Times with fears that their spouse or dependent will be deported while they are deployed, and veterans have contacted the paper worried that despite their military service, their family will be split apart.

Secretary Jim Mattis has said previously that active duty service members and veterans who had served honorably and who were part of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program would be protected. Mattis said he would work with DHS to see whether there were similar protections available for their dependents.

Brazilian Mom, Son Separated At Border Reunited In Chicago

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

CHICAGO (AP) – A Brazilian woman separated from her son in May while seeking asylum in the U.S. has been reunited with the 10-year-old boy in Chicago.

The reunion occurred Thursday afternoon, just hours after a federal judge ordered the U.S. government to release the boy to his mother.

The mother, Sirley Silveira Paixao, cried as Judge Manish Shah said they should be promptly reunited.

The 30-year-old woman couldn't stop smiling after the hearing. Through an interpreter, she said she was "very happy" and would never let her son leave her side.

The order came shortly after Shah reunited another Brazilian family. He mulled his decision in the other case for hours, but he took just minutes Thursday, noting no one questioned the mother's fitness to care for her child.

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2nd Brazilian Boy Held At Chicago Shelter Reunited With Mom After Judge's Ruling

By Patrick M. O'Connell

[Chicago Tribune](#), July 5, 2018

For the second time in a week, a federal judge in Chicago ordered a Brazilian boy reunited with his mother after the pair were separated at the United States' southern border.

Sirley Paixao smiled widely, then cried as she hugged her lawyers after U.S. District Judge Manish S. Shah on Thursday issued the order during a brief hearing. Paixao was reunited with son Diego, 10, later Thursday afternoon after the boy was released from a Chicago shelter run by Heartland Alliance.

Paixao pulled her son close as the two walked onto the sidewalk, the boy sheepishly grinning for the news cameras.

"It feels good," Diego said. "I feel relieved."

Diego said he played lots of soccer and watched the World Cup while waiting to see what would happen with his case.

He said he is excited to eat dinner at McDonald's on Thursday night before the family flies to the Boston area, where they will stay with relatives.

Paixao said she had trouble eating and sleeping in the days leading up to the reunion, but it was all worth it to be together again with her son in the U.S.

"I'm relieved to have my son in my hands now," she said. "It just feels like a burden has been released from my shoulders."

The Brazilian foreign minister, Aloysio Nunes, was in Chicago on Thursday, visiting some of the children being held at shelters. He also plans to meet with consular officials about the situation, according to a news release from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry.

Earlier Thursday, a different federal judge took under advisement another case involving Brazilian boys separated from their father.

A lawyer for the U.S. government and customs officials told the judge he did not know exactly how many Brazilian immigrant children are being held in Chicago shelters but that several are being kept together here because of language and familiarity considerations.

Paixao and Diego were separated by U.S. customs officials May 24 near Santa Teresa, N.M., as they illegally entered the U.S. seeking asylum.

Paixao pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of attempting to enter the country illegally, one of her lawyers, Jesse Bless said, and she was sentenced to time served. Bless said the detention and separation were implemented under the government's "zero-tolerance" policy, which was in effect at the time.

Paixao has an asylum petition pending, but Bless declined to offer specifics about why she decided to flee Brazil.

Paixao went to live with family friends in Massachusetts while seeking her son's release. Paixao filed a temporary restraining order and permanent injunction in federal court against Immigration and Customs Enforcement asking that her son be released. She saw Diego last week at Heartland, but he remained there as the court case was pending.

"I am extremely happy, I don't even have words to express how I am feeling right now," Paixao said. "Until today, I was lost without him. He's my only family. Without him, there's no reason to even be here."

The judge said Paixao's case closely mirrored the situation of Lidia Souza and her son, Diogo, 9, who also were separated after illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in late May. Shah last week ordered Diogo released to his mother. "My thinking on that hasn't changed," Shah said.

Bless said the United States mishandled these recent immigration cases.

"I don't need to sit here and criticize the government, but it was not well-thought out, to say the least," Bless said. "Ultimately, unfortunately, children suffered. And that is the take-away. I want to put a positive light on it that the public has really rallied around this human issue. And we need to think about not the mistake, but how we're going to heal as a country."

After walking out of the shelter and answering questions from reporters, the mother and boy walked toward a waiting SUV.

Diego kissed his mom on the cheek before they headed off for the long-awaited meal together.

Judge Orders 10-year-old Brazilian Boy Released To Mom In Immigration Case

By Carlos Ballesteros

[Chicago Sun-Times](#), July 5, 2018

"Be hopeful."

That's the message Sirley Silveira Paixao has for fellow asylum-seeking mothers who were separated from their children at the U.S.-Mexico border in recent months.

On Thursday, a federal judge in Chicago ordered the federal government to release Paixao's son, Diego, to her custody after spending more than a month apart.

"We expected today's results given the judge's previous ruling," Paixao said through a translator at a press conference Thursday morning after the hearing. "I'm excited to have him back and he's not going to leave my side ever again."

Lawyers for the mom asked U.S. District Judge Manish S. Shah to order the boy freed, and for the second time in such a case, Shah agreed. The judge made a similar ruling last month in the case of a 9-year-old Brazilian boy who had been separated from his mother, Lidia Souza, at the border on May 30.

Upon apprehension at the border, Paixao and her son were placed in a federal detention facility in El Paso, Texas, on May 22.

Two days later, authorities shipped Diego to a facility in Chicago run by Heartland Alliance, a non-profit contracted to house "unaccompanied" refugee and immigrant minors by the Office of Refugee Resettlement under the Department of Health and Human Services.

The mother and child were separated from each other as part of President Donald Trump's "zero tolerance policy," which aims to criminally prosecute all persons caught attempting to illegally cross the U.S.-Mexico border, including parents traveling with their children seeking asylum. A consent decree reached in 1997 forbids the government to hold children in detention centers for more than 20 days.

Paixao was released from federal custody on June 13 and is living with a family friend near Boston.

Paixao's son was held at a Heartland facility since May 24, according to court records. Paixao was not able to communicate with her son until June 14. During that first phone call, Paixao says she "cried so heavily that her son was unable to recognize her voice."

On Monday, Paixao filed a lawsuit in the Northern District of Illinois calling for Diego's immediate release. Her lawyers contended that the government could not hold her son as an unaccompanied minor given that he has a fit parent who entered the country with him.

Judge Shah agreed and filed a motion to immediately release Diego to Paixao's custody. Lawyers representing Heartland Alliance, which was named in the lawsuit, were not present at Monday's hearing.

Since October, federal authorities have separated roughly 3,500 children from their parents at the border.

On June 27, U.S. District Court Judge Dana Sabraw in California ordered federal officials to stop detaining parents apart from their children except if the parent is unfit or if the parent declines reunification. Sabraw also ordered the government to reunify all parents with their children who are under the age of 5 within 14 days and reunify all parents with their minor children age 5 and older within 30 days.

On Thursday, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said the agency "has identified under 3,000 children in total" in its custody who were separated from their parents at the border, "including approximately 100 children under the age of 5."

It is unclear whether the government will meet the court-ordered deadline for reunification.

Hundreds of thousands of people gathered in cities and towns across the country last weekend in protest of the Trump administration's zero-tolerance policy.

Paixao was a featured speaker at the march and rally in Boston. There she spoke of the pain of having her son stripped from her.

"Nothing will ever repay this," she told WCVB through a translator. "Just give these children back to their parents. These children are suffering. We don't even know how these children are going to come out of this facility psychologically."

Immigrant Family Detention Center Puts Berks County In Eye Of Political Storm

By Peter Hall

[Allentown \(PA\) Morning Call](#), July 3, 2018

As the federal government steps back from its policy of separating migrant children and parents at the southern border, a Berks County facility where immigration authorities have for years detained families seeking refuge in United

States is drawing the attention of advocates and lawmakers concerned about the conditions inside.

The Berks County Residential Center outside Reading has 96 beds where adults and children, mostly from Central America but also Europe and the Middle East, are kept while federal authorities weigh their claims that they're unsafe in their home countries.

Operated by Berks County under a contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement — the federal agency responsible for enforcing immigration law — the center has been under scrutiny by human rights watchdogs who say it needs to shut down. They cite concerns about sexual assault, inadequate health care and the inhumanity of detaining children in what some say are prison-like conditions.

David Bennion, director of the Free Migration Project in Philadelphia, compared the Berks center and two like it in Texas to the internment camps where Japanese Americans were locked up during World War II.

"People who have gone through that as children have talked about how that caused them lifelong trauma," Bennion said.

The Berks center, one of only three facilities in the United States where migrant families are detained, drew the attention of human rights advocates and immigration lawyers in 2015.

Nearly 30 mothers and their children challenged their detentions while they appealed the government's efforts to deport them without court hearings. They initially lost the challenge and some were deported, but those whose children were granted special immigration status and were able to continue the fight were held in the Berks center for more than two years before immigration judges ordered their release.

Berks County immigration lawyer Jacquelyn Kline, who helped represent the families, said she fears that President Donald Trump's order last month to stop separating children from their families, could mean more families will be brought to the Berks center — and for extended periods.

"We could be looking at the return to that policy where people would be held long-term," Kline said.

A spokeswoman for Gov. Tom Wolf, who agrees with members of Congress who want to close the center, said Tuesday that the administration has revoked the Berks center's child care license. That move is the subject of litigation within the state Department of Human Services. But even if it was upheld the federal government could continue to operate the facility without the license, under a direct contract with Berks County.

"Gov. Wolf urges the Trump Administration to shut this center down," spokeswoman Sara Goulet said, adding that Wolf has repeatedly asked federal authorities to allow migrant families to enter the community under supervision while they await the outcomes in their immigration cases.

A Lehigh Valley lawmaker who toured the center this week said that while he finds the Trump Administration's practice of separating or detaining families abhorrent, he's satisfied that families in the Berks center are receiving appropriate health and psychological treatment and that they are well-fed and cared for.

State Rep. Peter Schweyer, D-Lehigh, visited the center Monday with state Sen. Judith Schwank, D-Berks. Rep. Chris Rabb, D-Philadelphia, and Berks County officials. Schweyer said he spoke with parents and saw county social workers treating them kindly. The families had privacy in their sleeping areas and bathrooms. The children were engaged in what appeared to be English immersion classes provided by the Berks County Intermediate Unit.

The parents, some of whom had endured six-week journeys from Central America, seemed at ease, Schweyer said.

"When you're literally crossing deserts, jumping on buses ... just to be in air conditioning on a 100-degree day and not wondering where your next meal is coming from is a relief," Schweyer said.

Schweyer said that while he would prefer families be released under supervision to wait for their cases to be decided, he was relieved to see that conditions were generally good at the Berks center, nothing like the images that have saturated the news of children at the border sleeping on mats or weeping as their mothers are taken away.

"Since I don't get to make that decision, I would much prefer people to be in this situation," he said. Money-making contract

Berks County commissioners declined interview requests. An assistant for Commissioners Chairman Christian Leinbach said county officials are barred from speaking about the center under the county's contract with ICE. An ICE spokesman provided The Morning Call with facts about the center but did not respond to a request to tour the facility. The Morning Call has filed Freedom of Information Act and Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law requests for the county's contract with ICE.

The Reading Eagle reported in 2016 that Berks County received about \$1.3 million annually under the contract for operating expenses and use of the building.

Housed in a former nursing home in Bern Township, about 40 miles southwest of Allentown, the center was established in 2001 to provide "a safe, secure and humane environment," for families as they go through the immigration process. Adults are housed with their children in a dormitory setting with day rooms, a library, TV room, recreation rooms and a toddler play area. Families and children older than 10 can move freely through the center. An outdoor recreation area has a playground, athletic courts and fields, according to ICE.

The center has a law library with computers and legal publications for research, in addition to computers that families can use for email and other online services, ICE said.

Children receive educational assessments and education plans. Classes are taught by state certified teachers with training in English as a second language. Detainees have access to medical and mental health care 365 days a year, according to ICE.

Those detained may have a different view, said Bennion, who noted advocates are concerned about conditions in the center amid published reports that some children haven't received timely medical treatment. In 2016, for example, The Guardian reported that a 5-year-old girl suffered from cramps and diarrhea for weeks because of shigellosis, a contagious disease that went undiagnosed despite her mother's constant pleading with medical staff. The Guardian also reported that nurses in the center told the mother of a toddler who was vomiting blood that her daughter simply needed to drink more water. It was four days before she was allowed to take the 3-year-old to a hospital, according to the report.

Children confined for months have grown depressed and desperate and some even have contemplated suicide, a group of mothers said in a 2016 letter to the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE. The mothers too felt desperate, launching a two-week hunger strike to expedite their cases.

Bennion said the center hasn't been the safe haven the government claims. In 2016, Daniel W. Sharkey of West Reading, a former center employee, pleaded guilty to institutional sexual assault, admitting he had a sexual relationship with a detainee, the Reading Eagle reported. He was sentenced to six to 23 months in jail.

The same year, the state Department of Human Services revoked the center's license after finding that the center was operating under a license that allowed it to house delinquent children but not families. Berks County appealed and an administrative law judge last year reversed the decision, saying the revocation was the result of political pressure on the governor and DHS Secretary Ted Dallas.

DHS asked the court to reconsider and a new decision is expected soon. Afraid to return

The families detained in the facility come to a port of entry or cross the border seeking asylum from danger in their home countries. To qualify for refuge in the United States, migrants must persuade immigration officials they have a "credible fear" of harm if they are forced to return.

Schweyer said he learned during his visit that most families at the Berks center are held only until they have an interview to explain why they're seeking asylum. Most had been at the center for less than two weeks. Some, however, are held longer while they appeal the denial of their asylum requests, he said.

Bennion contends that's a violation of federal and state law. Under state law, children may not be housed in unlicensed facilities, he said. And under a 1997 settlement in a federal case outlining the standards of treatment for juvenile migrants, immigration authorities must not detain children for more than 20 days.

When one child held in Berks with his mother for more than two years won his release last year, an immigration judge in York County called his detention unconscionable.

"[The child], now all of 3 years old, has gone from diapers to detention in his young life with no understanding or exposure to life beyond secure custody," Judge Walter Durling wrote.

The solution, Bennion said, is to close the Berks center.

"We know that the governor could direct DHS to just close the prison, given the risk to life and safety that we have seen in these other instances and the lifelong trauma that results," he said.

Wolf spokeswoman Goulet said DHS can only close the center if it documents misconduct that causes "immediate and serious danger" to the children. The department conducts regular unannounced inspections and has not found the basis for an emergency order to close the facility, she said.

Donald Trump Is Using Crime Victims To Drive His Immigration Agenda. That's The Kind Of Leader He Is.

By EJ Montini

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump wants you to be afraid of people you shouldn't fear. He wants that fear to motivate you to support him and his policies. And he is willing to do anything — even exploit the families of crime victims — to do this.

How do we know this? Because he has done it.

Following the announcement that his administration would no longer be separating migrant families at the border Trump held a press conference and photo op with individuals whose family members had been killed by undocumented immigrants.

In doing this, he drew a direct connection between migrants at the border and criminals.

He said:

These are the American citizens permanently separated from their loved ones — the word 'permanently' being the word that you have to think about — 'permanently.' They're not separated for a day or two days. These are permanently separated, because they were killed by criminal illegal aliens. These are the families the media ignores.

First, these families are NOT ignored by the news media.

Second, any number of studies have shown that immigrants are much less likely to be convicted of crimes than native-born Americans.

That's not a political argument. It's a simple fact. Facts should drive policy, not fear

The author of a study by the libertarian Cato Institute said: "As a percentage of their respective populations, there were 56 percent fewer criminal convictions of illegal immigrants than of native-born Americans in Texas in 2015. The criminal conviction rate for legal immigrants was about 85 percent below the native-born rate."

The author of a study published in the journal *Criminology* actually found that crime goes down in places with higher numbers of undocumented immigrants, saying, "Increases in the undocumented immigrant population within states are associated with significant decreases in the prevalence of violence."

The pain of those who have lost loved ones to crime — no matter the perpetrator — is real, and they can express their grief or anger or outrage in any way they choose.

But Trump is using this particular group of victims for political gain.

It should disgust you.

Imagine a president parading before the cameras the families of crime victims killed by African-Americans.

Would that be seen as racist?

Is it any less unfair than taking advantage of families impacted by undocumented immigrants?

Imagine a president trotting out before cameras the families of crime victims killed by white perpetrators? How would that go over?

Or perpetrators only from the South? Or only from New York City? Or only with Italian surnames? Or only Jewish ... wait ... that has been done before. Trump uses hate for political gain

During Trump's press conference with the families of victims killed by undocumented immigrants he said:

You don't hear that. I always hear that, 'Oh, no, the population is safer than the people that live in the country.' You've heard that, fellas. Right? You've heard that. I hear it so much. And I say, 'Is that possible?' The answer is it's not true. You hear it's like they're better people than what we have — than our citizens. It's not true.

Actually, the part about being safer IS true.

And the claim about being "better" was never made. By anyone. That's just Trump trying to stir resentment and hate, suggesting you can't trust immigrants no matter what facts are presented.

Just as he's done with Muslims. And to a degree with the media. Howling about "fake news." Calling journalists the "enemy of the people." All of it for political gain.

The strategy is simple. Ignore the facts. Play to fears and existing prejudices. And if the people you are trying to

convince don't yet have fully developed prejudices, teach them.

Trump has done so with undocumented immigrants. He has done so with Muslims. And I'd guess he's not finished spreading the seeds of distrust and hate about other groups to audiences old and young.

That kind of political strategy has been utilized before.

In 1938 there was a children's book published in Germany called "The Poisonous Mushroom." There is a line in it that goes: "Just as it is often hard to tell a toadstool from an edible mushroom, so too it is often very hard to recognise the Jew as a swindler and criminal."

E.J. Montini is a columnist for The Arizona Republic, where this column first appeared.

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

DHS Expands Power To Initiate Deportations

Citizenship and Immigration Services will begin deportation for fraudsters, bogus applicants

By Stephen Dinan

[Washington Times](#), July 5, 2018

The Trump administration has expanded the government's deportation powers, issuing guidelines urging officers at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services — the agency that oversees legal immigration and naturalization — to begin the removal process for people who use fraudulent documents or who illegally took government benefits.

USCIS officers have always had powers, but in the past had usually referred cases to other parts of Homeland Security for decisions on deportation.

But new guidance memos reviewed by The Washington Times show USCIS is now pushing to advance its own role in policing illegal immigration.

"For too long, USCIS officers uncovering instances of fraudulent or criminal activity have been limited in their ability to help ensure U.S. immigration laws are faithfully executed," L. Francis Cissna, the agency's director, said in announcing the changes publicly. "This updated policy equips USCIS officers with clear guidance they need and deserve to support the enforcement priorities established by the president, keep our communities safe, and protect the integrity of our immigration system from those seeking to exploit it."

The memos tell agency employees to be on the looking for people who apply for naturalization or another legal immigration benefit but who have criminal records, used fraudulent documents, lied about their applications or had abused public benefit programs.

In the past, those might have been enough to reject the application, but USCIS would either drop the issue or refer the case to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for possible deportation. Under the new guidelines,

dated June 28, USCIS employees are now urged to begin the deportation process themselves.

That involves issuing a Notice to Appear, or NTA, which signals the beginning of the deportation process. Someone who receives an NTA then must go before an immigration judge, has the chance to appeal, and only then is deported.

“When fraud, misrepresentation, or evidence of abuse of public benefit programs is part of the record and the alien is removable, USCIS will issue an NTA upon denial of the petition or application, or other appropriate negative eligibility determination,” the guidance says.

The new guidance reclaims USCIS’s role as a gatekeeper and expands the number of government employees on the lookout for deportable migrants.

The immediate effect could be to discourage people with bogus claims from coming forward to apply, since they now run a greater risk of ending up in deportation proceedings.

People applying under the Obama-era DACA program are exempted from the new guidance, meaning illegal immigrant “Dreamers” won’t generally have to worry about being put in deportation if their claim is rejected. The prohibition on sharing their information with ICE is also still in place, according to a second memo obtained by The Times.

U.S. Lets Yemenis Stay 18 More Months

By Reuters Editorial

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Women Detained At Corso’s Granted Bonds In First Round Of Hearings

By Lily Moore-Eissenberg

[Toledo \(OH\) Blade](#), July 5, 2018

DETROIT — Seated beside her father and her pastor in immigration court, Yolibel Domingues, 13, leaned forward to hear how much it would cost to bring her mother home.

Margarita Eugenio-Delgado, mother of Yolibel and José Luis Domingues, 11, has what the government’s lawyer called an “adverse immigration history.” Between 2002 and 2003, she was apprehended at least five times trying to cross the border into the United States. And one month ago, she was arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers in large-scale raids of Corso’s garden centers in Sandusky and Castalia, Ohio.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) made a surprise raid Tuesday, June 5, 2018, at the Sandusky location, pictured, and Castalia location of Corso’s Flower & Garden Center.

Thirteen of the women arrested at Corso’s, including Mrs. Eugenio-Delgado, appeared by video conference

Thursday in Detroit Immigration Court to plead to the allegations against them and in most cases seek bonds for release.

Live from Calhoun County Jail in Battle Creek, Mich., the women wore orange jumpsuits and traded places in front of the camera for back-to-back hearings — the first to take place since the June 5 raids.

Not counting the three women whose hearings were rescheduled, all conceded to the charge of removability — meaning they accepted allegations that they had broken immigration law, in most cases by residing in the United States without documents or with expired ones.

Judge Ian R. Simons granted five women the minimum bond amount possible, \$1,500. In two cases, he set \$5,000 bonds — the amount requested by the government.

When Judge Simons announced Mrs. Eugenio-Delgado’s bond — \$5,000, with alternatives to detention like mandatory reporting to ICE or an ankle monitor — Yolibel sat still as her father and pastor whispered beside her. She began to cry.

“It was sad to see her there,” Yolibel said afterward. “I just want her to come back soon so she can be with us again.”

But relief mixed with shock at seeing her mother on the screen as it dawned on Yolibel that they would likely be reunited the next day.

“We wanted to pay the bond today, but God willing, we’ll do it tomorrow,” said José Domingues, Yolibel’s father. With the help of family, friends, and church members, he has collected enough funds to pay the bond and pick up Mrs. Eugenio-Delgado on Friday, once her paperwork has been processed.

In determining bond amounts, immigration judges consider family ties and criminal records, among other factors, according to a U.S. Department of Justice opinion. The highest bond Thursday was \$7,500, granted to a detainee who has lived in the United States for a year, with no family ties. The only criminal conviction was for driving without a license 10 years ago.

When Judge Simons granted \$1,500 bonds — the lowest — he often cited the well-being of U.S.-citizen children and a family’s financial means as reasons to favor the lower amount.

Luz Mirella Gonzalez-Garcia, for one, arrived in the United States in 2002, and she is the sole provider for all four of her U.S.-citizen children, ages 2, 3, 13, and 15. If Ms. Gonzalez-Garcia remained in detention, Judge Simons said, “there would be emotional and financial suffering for all her U.S. children.”

But for older women with adult children, like Maricella Gonzalez-Garcia, who has three grandchildren, family ties seemed to carry less weight. Judge Simons gave her a \$5,000 bond.

Maricella Gonzalez-Garcia will apply for asylum on the basis of domestic abuse, her lawyer said, though Judge Simons said that Attorney General Jeff Sessions' recent federal ruling has "cast some doubt" on domestic violence as grounds for asylum.

Four women will apply for cancellations of removal, which if granted would make them lawful permanent residents. Three will likely apply for asylum, including Maricella Gonzalez-Garcia and Sofia Enrique-Cortez, whose brother was recently murdered in Oaxaca, Mexico. One woman requested a voluntary departure and will board a plane to Mexico within two weeks.

Lawyers representing detainees said they were pleased with Judge Simons' decisions. Marva De Armas, of Ann Arbor-based firm Immigration Law PLLC, called his rulings "unheard of" in the Detroit Immigration Court under President Trump.

"We were getting \$5,000, \$6,000, \$10,000, \$15,000 bonds for cases you just heard," she said. "Under the new administration, the government started pushing back more."

Still, she said, even the lowest bond is a financial hardship for families of detained Corso's workers.

"It is a substantial amount of money for the families to front," she said. "Not only are they working in agriculture, they're working at a nursery and at the time they were all working without employment documents, which means they were probably not even getting paid minimum wage."

The Department of Homeland Security's counsel declined to comment on the hearings or the rulings.

Friday, Norwalk Pastor Elvin Gonzalez will drive Yolibel to Detroit to post bond and then to Battle Creek to pick up her mother. Once Mrs. Eugenio-Delgado is released, the family will go to work compiling documents to try to prove to an immigration judge that she qualifies to stay in the country long-term.

Eugenio Mollo, managing attorney at Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, the firm assisting the detainees and coordinating legal aid, said Judge Simons' rulings were fair and reasonable. Even so, circumstances tempered success.

"Every time you have family separation it's hard for me to experience the emotion of happiness," Mr. Mollo said. "That being said, families being together like they should be does give me and others a sense of some happiness."

Hearings for women detained in Battle Creek, Mich., will continue Friday. Hearings for Corso's men detained in Youngstown will take place on July 17 and 19.

How To Locate A Person Arrested By ICE

By Rachel Beth Banks

[Arizona Republic](#), July 5, 2018

Lack of information – and plenty of bad information – has led to heartache and confusion when family members

search for loved ones who are in custody, immigration attorney Rekha Nair says.

Dozens of residents and immigration advocates gathered in Phoenix recently to learn how to navigate the specifics of immigration-court cases, including how to locate detained family members through online databases such as the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office inmate lookup and ICE's Online Detainee Locator System.

On any given day, 3,000 immigrants, some of whom are citizens or legal permanent residents, are detained in Arizona, according to the American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona.

"There's tons of misinformation out there about how the immigration system works," Nair said, such as "who qualifies for bonds, who doesn't, who is detained, who's not? We definitely have people who haven't been able to get in touch with family."

Because local law enforcement officials must work with federal immigration officials, it can be difficult to figure out where an immigrant without legal status is being held.

"There are a host of ways that people are brought into the system," said Nair, a former federal public defender and current member of the Florence Project, a non-profit dedicated to pro-bono legal services for immigrants. "One really troubling one in my view is a traffic stop, where all that's supposed to be addressed there is the issue of a ticket, and I think it's unfortunate that in Arizona, (if) you're undocumented, you can't get a license."

If an officer arrests an undocumented person for driving without proper identification, it's difficult to find out where the detainees are, said Nair, who helped to lead the training.

"Someone will call me and they'll be like, 'My family member was just detained. They're in immigration,'" Nair said. "And my question is actually, like, 'Are you sure?' A lot of times, people are actually not in immigration – or they're not there yet."

Without family members, Nair said, immigrants in custody may become discouraged while making their way through court.

Living United for Change in Arizona, a non-profit that works with lower- and middle-class families to advocate for racial and economic equality, conducted the training session. Aldo Gonzalez, immigration services coordinator at LUCHA, helped Nair walk the attendees through a common scenario: What happens when a driver without documentation gets pulled over in Maricopa County?

In that case, the driver will be cited for driving without a license and taken to the county's Fourth Avenue Jail. Authorities will run the driver's fingerprints, and once officials realize the person is undocumented, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents stationed at the jail will take the person into custody upon release by county sheriff's deputies.

The training was personal for Aldemaro Peña Figueroa, who moved from El Salvador as a legal permanent resident in 2001. He did not become a naturalized citizen until 2017.

The continuing rush of Salvadorans fleeing violence and poverty in his home country, and the current issue with family separation at the southern border, saddened and emboldened Peña, he said. The Mexican Consulate fights for Mexican people, Peña Figueroa said, but the Salvadoran Consulate is falling short in the protection of its people against the U.S. government's policies.

The same policies, Peña Figueroa argued, that are "creating the structural conditions for (immigrants) to die."

Peña Figueroa came to the training to learn how he can help.

"I can actually visit people at the prison and try to give them some hope," Peña Figueroa said.

Other ways advocates can help, Nair said, is to donate to legal services and team with local non-profits, such as Trans Queer Pueblo and Puente Human Rights Movement, which visit incarcerated migrants.

ICE Agents Accused Of 'Fishing' For Undocumented People In Hamtramck

[WXYZ-TV Detroit](#), July 5, 2018

HAMTRAMCK, Mich. (WXYZ) – A Muslim civil rights group is accusing agents for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of racially profiling, going door-to-door at some homes and making traffic stops in Hamtramck.

"What it appears is that they are fishing to see if they can find undocumented individuals out in the community," said Amy Doukoure, attorney for The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) – Michigan.

Doukoure said there were pictures and video on social media of the interactions that they no longer have access to because they've been deleted. But they are still alerting people to be aware of their rights if they are stopped by immigration agents.

Hamtramck Mayor Karen Majewski said she asked the police department about the rumors of ICE agents conducting random searches, but police officials were not aware of that happening.

Khaalid Walls, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Northeast Regional Communications Director, released the following statement to 7 Action News Thursday:

ICE is focused on removing public safety threats, such as convicted criminal aliens and gang members, as well as individuals who have violated our nation's immigration laws, including those who illegally re-entered the country after being removed and immigration fugitives ordered removed by federal immigration judges.

In Fiscal Year 2017, 92 percent of all aliens arrested by ICE had criminal convictions, pending criminal charges, were

an immigration fugitive, or were an illegal re-entrant. However, ICE no longer exempts classes or categories of removable aliens from potential enforcement. All of those in violation of the immigration laws may be subject to immigration arrest, detention and, if found removable by final order, removal from the United States.

ICE deportation officers do not conduct sweeps or raids that target aliens indiscriminately. ICE's enforcement actions are targeted and lead driven. ICE conducts targeted immigration enforcement in compliance with federal law and agency policy. During targeted enforcement operations, ICE officers frequently encounter additional suspects who may be in the United States in violation of federal immigration laws. Those persons will be evaluated on a case by case basis and, when appropriate, arrested by ICE.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Laredo Man Pleads Guilty In San Antonio Court To Conspiracy To Transport 53 Undocumented Immigrants

By Guillermo Contreras

[San Antonio Express-News](#), July 5, 2018

A Laredo man pleaded guilty Thursday to conspiracy to transport more than 50 undocumented immigrants in a tractor-trailer to San Antonio.

Gerardo Javier Carreon, 36, was caught with 53 undocumented immigrants on the evening of June 12 near Broadway and Loop 410 in a chaotic scene in which the immigrants ran from the trailer when authorities approached.

Carreon, who was indicted June 20 on charges of transporting undocumented immigrants and conspiracy to transport them, entered a not guilty plea on Tuesday, but his lawyer, Assistant Federal Public Defender Alfredo Villarreal, quickly struck a plea deal with federal prosecutors in which Carreon will likely cooperate in order for leniency, according to court documents.

U.S. District Judge Fred Biery took Carreon's guilty plea Thursday, and tentatively set his sentencing for Oct. 5. He faces a maximum of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew Lathrop agreed to dismiss the transporting charge at sentencing.

As a result of the plea, three of the four immigrants who had been kept here as material witnesses to testify against Carreon will be cut loose from the criminal proceedings and instead be processed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement for deportation. The others have already been deported or are in such proceedings. The remaining witness remains because he may have more information about the conspiracy, Lathrop told the judge.

Carreon, who has also lived in Hebbronville, has a lengthy record that includes past convictions for smuggling

immigrants and drugs, and some failures to appear in court or violating terms of federal supervision, all of which would have counted against him if he tried to persuade a judge to grant him bail on his latest case, public records show.

Carreon made national headlines when authorities from several agencies were called to an alley near the 8400 block of Laurelcrest Place on June 12 and found dozens of people suspected of entering the country illegally in and around a tractor-trailer. Some of the immigrants injured themselves jumping over fences and off houses as they ran from the scene. Carreon also took off, but was caught.

He later told authorities that he drove his own pickup to meet with the driver of the rig near an H-E-B distribution center in San Antonio because the driver didn't want to go through with the delivery, according to a factual basis Biery read in court from Carreon's plea deal documents. Carreon used bolt cutters to cut the lock of the refrigerated trailer to let the immigrants out, when authorities were alerted and everyone ran, according to the plea deal.

Of the immigrants caught, six were treated at the hospital, 47 were taken into custody immediately and processed for deportation. The immigrants were from Brazil, Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico, records show.

Lathrop told the judge that authorities are looking for at least one accomplice, who has not been charged.

Guillermo Contreras is a San Antonio Express-News staff writer.

Asylum Seeker Turned Coyote Shows 'Critical Need' For Immigration Enforcement

By Jamie Satterfield

[Knoxville \(TN\) News Sentinel](#), July 5, 2018

A federal prosecutor in Knoxville on Thursday took direct aim at the controversy over the Justice Department's illegal immigration crackdown – pointing to the case of an asylum seeker who smuggled undocumented immigrants for money after she won temporary freedom pending her appeal.

Marlen Abigail Hernandez-Lanza, 25, sought refugee status after fleeing Honduras at the age of 22 but was denied, according to court records and statements in U.S. District Court Thursday.

But she was allowed to go free and remain in the U.S. pending a June 2019 appeal hearing. Speeding to Baltimore

In January, the Tennessee Highway Patrol stopped her vehicle on Interstate 40 in Knox County on a speeding violation. Inside the vehicle were three men – one from the Dominican Republic and two from Sri Lanka.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agent Trevor Christensen said in a court filing Hernandez-Lanza later admitted she had been serving as a "coyote" – someone who charges undocumented immigrants exorbitant fees to

smuggle them into and around the U.S. – while free in her asylum case.

She earned \$1,000 on most trips and has smuggled undocumented immigrants into New York; Jacksonville, Florida; Orlando, Florida; Savannah, Georgia; Nebraska and Maryland, he wrote.

She was taking the two Sri Lankan men to Baltimore, Maryland, which Assistant U.S. Attorney Bart Slabbekorn noted was near the nation's capital — when he used her as an example of why the Justice Department's immigration enforcement crackdown is important.

"The defendant was transporting them to Baltimore, Maryland, a location within 30 miles of our nation's capital," Slabbekorn told U.S. District Judge Pamela Reeves. "That is a very dangerous situation ... The defendant ... was granted bond while her (asylum) appeal was pending. What did she do with that bond?"

"She showed no respect for the laws of this country," he said. "She was given an opportunity for her refugee claim to be appealed and given bond and this is the way she chose to use that. This underscores the critical need to enforce immigration laws in this country."

But Assistant Federal Defender Jonathan Moffatt told Reeves the prosecutor's fears were overblown.

"My information was these Sri Lankans were released (as no threat)," Moffatt said, adding that Baltimore, Maryland, has a community of Sri Lankan refugees living there already.

Moffatt said his client won't be freed again – regardless of whether Reeves ordered more jail time for her in the smuggling case. ICE has filed a detainer against her and will initiate deportation proceedings as soon as her criminal case is complete.

"Because of the immigration hold, she's already served six months in jail," he said.

Moffatt urged Reeves to sentence Hernandez-Lanza to the time she's already spent in jail so ICE can begin deportation. The maximum sentence she faced under federal sentencing guidelines for transporting undocumented immigrants across the border was a year in jail.

Reeves ruled there was no pointing in holding Hernandez-Lanza in a federal prison a few more months since she will be transferred to an immigration detention facility upon release anyway.

"You could remain in custody weeks, if not months, until your immigration issue is resolved," Reeves said.

Alabama Man Allegedly Stole \$22M In Agency Computers Meant For Kids

By Aaron Boyd

[NextGov](#), July 5, 2018

An Alabama computer store owner was indicted last month for allegedly defrauding the government's Computers

for Learning program, an initiative in which federal agencies donate used computer equipment to schools in need.

According to the Justice Department, Steven Mays, 50, of Athens, Alabama, joined the CFL program in 2007 as a representative of Dwight Baptist Academy, a parochial school in Dwight, Illinois.

For over a decade, Mays—under several aliases—solicited and accepted computer equipment on behalf of the school. In total, that equipment originally cost the government more than \$22 million. He then told school administrators that the equipment was in poor condition and needed to be repaired before it could be used.

According to the indictment, Mays accepted far more equipment than he told the school about, which he then sold in his Alabama store—Mays Computer Company—and online through eBay.

Mays faces four counts of mail fraud and one count of wire fraud—both of which carry statutory sentences of up to 20 years in prison—and one count of theft of government property and one count of interstate transportation of stolen property—up to 10 years each.

He will be arraigned in Peoria Federal Court on a to-be-determined date.

The case was also investigated by the inspectors general at Justice, the Transportation Department, Environmental Protection Agency, General Services Administration, Homeland Security Department, NASA and Postal Service.

Carmel Swim Coach Charged For Child Exploitation, Pornography

[Current in Carmel \(IN\)](#), July 5, 2018

John Goelz, 29, Carmel, was arrested and charged July 3 for allegedly having a sexual relationship with a student.

U.S. Attorney Josh Minkler announced July 5 that Goelz faces federal charges for his alleged sexual involvement with one of his athletes.

Charges include sexual exploitation of a minor and possession of child pornography. Goelz remains in the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service. A detention hearing is set for July 10 in Federal Court in Indianapolis.

On June 29, law enforcement officials learned that Goelz may be involved in an inappropriate sexual relationship with a female athlete that he coached at the Carmel Swim Club and the Carmel High School Swim Team. Agents and officers were able to capture screenshots of text messages exchanged between Goelz and the minor victim. The messages indicated there was a sexual relationship between the two dating back to February.

A search warrant was secured for Goelz's residence and his personal cell phone. Further investigation revealed that Goelz and the minor victim were involved in a sexual

relationship, which included having sex at public parks in Hamilton County, Goelz's residence and a hotel in Anderson. The investigation further revealed that Goelz filmed the sexual activity with the minor victim at the hotel in Anderson using his cell phone, and a video file depicting the sexual activity was found on his cell phone.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the Hamilton County Metro Child Exploitation Task Force.

Goelz could face a minimum of fifteen years in prison if convicted.

If members of the public have further information regarding this case, they are encouraged to contact the Hamilton County Metro Child Exploitation Task Force at 317-595-3361.

Police Launch Dragnet For 3 Non-US Citizens Accused Of Raping Ohio Sisters

By Ryan Gaydos

[Fox News](#), July 5, 2018

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency joined the nationwide search for three men accused of kidnapping and raping two teen girls in Ohio, authorities said.

A fourth suspect has been arrested and charged in the alleged crime, police said Tuesday.

Bowling Green police are searching for David Ramos Contreras, 27, Juan Garcia Rios Adiel and Arnulfo Ramos. Police said Contreras is from Mexico. It is unclear where the others are from, though Adiel possesses a fraudulent permanent resident I.D. out of Florida, police said.

Adiel and Ramos are not believed to be U.S. citizens, according to WKRC-TV.

The fourth suspect, Simon Juan Thomas, 24, of Guatemala, was arrested and charged with unlawful sexual conduct with a minor, police said. Thomas was booked into the Wood County Justice Center, according to the Dayton Daily News.

The incident occurred sometime around June 28 after the victims, 13- and 14-year-old sisters, were taken to a hospital telling medical workers they had been sexually assaulted and held captive at a Bowling Green motel, WTOL-TV reported. Police said the teens had escaped their captors.

Police looking for help identifying two women seen with Contreras at an Ohio Walmart.

Police released photos of Contreras with two women exiting a Walmart in Holland on June 30. Police were seeking to identify the women.

Police were asking the public for help finding the three suspects.

The men were in the Bowling Green area working – two as dry wallers and one at Greenline Foods, according to WTOL-TV. They were reportedly staying in the motel, as were the girls with their mother.

SECRET SERVICE

Greenville Police Working With Secret Service To Stop Credit Card Scam

By Daniel J. Gross

[Greenville \(SC\) News](#), July 5, 2018

Greenville police are working with the U.S. Secret Service and police agencies across the country to arrest those responsible for a recent credit card skimming operation.

Two arrests have been made in Greenville in connection to an operation that used devices to steal people's credit card numbers without them knowing.

Investigators believe groups of people have traveled across the U.S. and carried out their skimming operation in the Greenville area between April and May.

Detective Michael Dean, who specializes in investigating financial crimes, said the group of suspects were responsible for stealing about 20 to 30 credit card numbers.

Devices that extract credit card numbers were placed on ATMs and gas station pumps, primarily along the stretch of Wade Hampton Boulevard from Greenville to Greer. The numbers were then posted and sold on specific sites online.

"It's pretty much Amazon for criminals," Dean said of the websites used. "Once they get that number, there's a certain way to re-code it on the back of a magnetic strip."

Scammers that specialize in credit card skimming travel the country to find target areas to steal card numbers. Dean said investigators believe they left the Greenville area in May and traveled north of South Carolina to hit other states.

"There's a ton of crews that do it," Dean said. "Just like we put our pants on and go to work, they put their pants on and go to work. That's what they do."

Dean said if someone can't physically spot a skimmer on a device before inserting their card, people should stay up-to-date with credit card transactions on bank statements.

"Check your accounts daily. That would be the best thing," he said. "If you see something out of ordinary, call the bank."

Some smaller police agencies in northern states and in the Midwest have made recent arrests of suspects that resemble the descriptions of those responsible for crimes in Greenville.

Dean said police are sharing information with those agencies in hopes of closing cases in Greenville and making more arrests.

The identities of those facing charges are not being released until the additional arrests are made, Dean said.

Authorities Seize Bank Accounts In Fraud Case

By Mike Donoghue

[Brattleboro \(VT\) Reformer](#), July 5, 2018

BURLINGTON — Federal authorities have seized three bank accounts controlled by a Windham County woman that they believe improperly pocketed about \$750,000 belonging to a now deceased Vernon resident, U.S. District Court records in Burlington show.

Sandra T. Moore is believed to be the person responsible for converting a \$750,516 check to her use between November 2017 and this summer, U.S. Secret Service Agent May Chow said in a court affidavit filed with a civil complaint in court.

No known arrests have been made.

The \$750,516 check had been issued to her partner, Mary L. Connolly, but she was hospitalized when the check was delivered Nov. 13, 2017 at her home by United Parcel Service, Chow said. It was from AHP Settlement Trust Fund. Connolly died about a month later, but Chow said her wire fraud investigation points to certain bank documents being forged.

Chief Federal Judge Geoffrey Crawford signed an order Tuesday approving the confiscation. He wrote the seizure was required because the money "constitutes proceeds of specified unlawful activity, namely, a wire fraud scheme."

Attempts by the Brattleboro Reformer to reach Moore were unsuccessful.

Two accounts are with the Citizens Bank in Brattleboro and one is with the Greenfield Savings Bank, where Moore eventually deposited \$500,000 from the initial \$750,516 check, the Secret Service and U.S. Attorney's Office said.

"As part of her scheme and to facilitate it, Moore forged Connolly's endorsement on the check, then deposited it into an account Moore had opened in Moore's name at Citizen's Bank. Moore later transferred \$500,000 of these funds to another account she opened in her name at Greenfield Savings Bank," Chow said in an affidavit.

"Moore used tens of thousands of dollars from the Citizens Bank account to enrich and benefit herself," the 20-year federal agent wrote.

The two women began a personal relationship in 2005 and they had lived together for a number of years in the home Connolly owned in Vernon, Chow said.

Connolly suffered from heart disease and in 2004 had bequeathed to her three children her entire estate, Chow said. By 2010 Connolly signed a durable power of attorney appointing Moore as her attorney-in-fact, but prohibited her

from making gifts on her behalf, Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregory Waples wrote.

Connolly was admitted to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center on Oct. 30, 2017 and remained there until she died Dec. 21, 2017. Moore's appointment as Connolly's attorney-in-fact ended with her death. Vermont law also prohibits an agent acting under a power of attorney from engaging in self-dealing, Waples wrote.

Chow in her 6-page affidavit goes through a series of transactions Moore made using several bank accounts, including two at the Citizens Bank in Brattleboro. One was a checking account and the other a money market account.

Moore initially deposited the \$750,516 check in the money market account, but later "made numerous debits and transfer of funds" from the money market account, court records show.

After Connolly's death, the Probate Court in Windham County appointed Brendan Connolly, one of her three children, as the executor of the estate, Chow wrote. Brendan Connolly, who is familiar with his mother's writing, is doubtful that some signatures are genuine, Chow said.

Moore withdrew \$500,000 from the money market account on Jan. 13, 2018 and made it payable to herself, Chow wrote. She said Moore then opened a new account at the Greenfield Savings Bank in Greenfield, Mass. The money has continued to generate monthly interest, Chow noted.

Meanwhile, the money market account had only \$67,000 remaining as of June 14, said Chow.

Moore had used the checking account to pay for various personal bills, including \$11,000 to the town of Newfane for property taxes on land she owned, Chow said. Moore also wrote checks for more than \$30,000 to members of her family and more than \$31,000 to pay for credit card obligations in her name at Citibank, the affidavit said.

The complaint also noted Moore opened a checking account at Citizens Bank in the name of Bella Dipinto in July 2013 and used the Vernon home as the address and her as the lone signer.

Later that month the name on the account was changed to Sandra T. Moore, doing business as Bella Depinto. It was unclear if Moore changed the spelling of Dipinto on the bank account or if there was a typographical error in Chow's affidavit.

U.S. Attorney Christina Nolan and her office spokesman Kraig Laporte both have not responded to messages left on Tuesday.

Connolly moved in 1985 to Vermont, where she worked as an assistant physical therapist, a chef and owner of a catering business, according to her obituary in the Brattleboro Reformer. Her survivors included her mother, three children, and two brothers.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Newspaper: Texas Fails To Enforce Flood Insurance Rules

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

HOUSTON (AP) — Texas officials are struggling to enforce part of a flood insurance program that aims to elevate or remove severely damaged properties from flood plains, according to a newspaper investigation.

The Houston Chronicle analyzed more than 36,000 insurance claims of properties that are frequently flooded and determined that about 16 percent of the properties had evidence of being substantially damaged by flooding at least once before.

The taxpayer-subsidized National Flood Insurance Program says officials should require home demolition or elevation if flood damage assessments are at least 50 percent of a home's value. But the newspaper found that state officials often undervalue damage estimates, which allowed people to move back into homes that are in vulnerable places without making changes.

Properties that didn't meet the program's 50 percent requirement have cost at least \$1.1 billion in insurance claims, according to the analysis. In Houston alone, seven properties have had more than 100 damage claims totaling \$9 million — even though the combined value of the buildings is just \$426,000, according to the newspaper.

"Nobody wants to tell a flood survivor, after they've lost everything, that, oh, by the way, you have to raise your house four feet," explained Chad Berginnis, executive director of the Association of State Floodplain Managers, a national organization that promotes education and policies that aim to mitigate flooding issues.

Following Hurricane Harvey, Houston officials notified more than 2,200 homeowners that their homes were substantially damaged. That accounts for just 1 percent of the more than 200,000 Houston homes that were flooded during the hurricane and the heavy rains that followed the storm.

Lynda Bates' 2,000-square-foot house on Galveston Island was flooded in 7 feet of water during Hurricane Ike in 2008. The city of Galveston found that her home was 44 percent damaged, while appraisal records show that it lost 67 percent of its value. Bates said she and her spouse rebuilt their home without any instructions from the city to raise it.

Galveston officials said they did what they could under difficult circumstances.

Information from: Houston Chronicle,
<http://www.houstonchronicle.com>

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Flood Games

By Mark Collette

[Houston Chronicle](#), July 4, 2018

Officials in Houston and across the country are failing to enforce a central pillar of the taxpayer-subsidized National Flood Insurance Program: Making sure severely damaged properties are elevated or removed from flood plains.

Thousands of such homes get rebuilt and then flood again, often for more than three times their worth, costing taxpayers more than \$1 billion in repeat losses.

The deeply indebted program is set to lapse July 31 without congressional reauthorization, and lawmakers have put forward a host of potential reforms to tie to that vote, but none directly address the costly problem of poorly enforced elevation requirements.

Texas has more flooded properties with evidence of this problem than any other state but Louisiana; Houston has more than any other city, a Houston Chronicle investigation found. Seven of the nation's 10 most frequently substantially damaged properties are in Houston. Those seven have had 107 damage claims totaling \$9 million, even though the combined value of those buildings is just \$426,000.

Under federal rules, local officials are supposed to assess flood damages and require demolition or elevation if the damage is estimated at 50 percent or more of the home's value. But telling traumatized flood victims that they will have to undertake expensive home elevation projects is politically and emotionally difficult, so officials lowball the damage estimates, putting people and homes back in vulnerable places, the Chronicle found.

The problem had largely been known only anecdotally, but the Chronicle's analysis used government data to bolster the reports of officials and flood victims in swamped communities, identifying thousands of losses that could have been avoided and homes put back in harm's way because requirements weren't followed.

Lynda Bates' 2,000-square-foot house on Galveston Island, for instance, is in no better a position that it was when Hurricane Ike swamped it with seven feet of water in 2008. She and her husband gutted it. Then they rebuilt at ground level, even though their front porch is just 300 feet from Offatts Bayou.

The city of Galveston did not object. It declared her home just 44 percent damaged, while appraisal records show it lost 67 percent of its value. Scores of Bates' neighbors did the same thing.

Ten years later, about 90 nearby homes remain at ground level, even though they are in a zone predicted to flood in a 100-year storm, which has about a 26 percent chance of happening during a 30-year mortgage.

"We were in a hurry," said Bates, a 70-year-old retired bank supervisor. "We wanted to get back in our home. The city never said anything to us."

Because they get the blessing of the local government, homeowners such as Bates can continue to buy flood insurance at discounted or subsidized rates through the flood insurance program, which reached \$25 billion in debt before the storms last year.

Galveston officials said they did the best they could under extraordinary circumstances, suddenly confronting construction permitting for an entire city all at once, after the storm inundated most of the city.

But it's not just those houses on those two streets in Galveston. It's hundreds more in that city, and thousands more across the nation.

The Chronicle examined claims records for more than 36,000 "severe repetitive loss" properties – the most frequently flooded properties in the flood insurance program nationwide. About 16 percent had evidence of being substantially damaged – beyond the 50 percent threshold – at least once before flooding again. This data suggests their damage assessments were too low or not enforced.

Properties that have avoided the 50 percent requirement in that fraction of the program have cost at least \$1.1 billion in insurance claims – twice what the buildings are worth. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, which administers flood insurance, does not release detailed data on all flood claims, so the Chronicle's examination reveals only a slice of the problem.

One of the nation's worst properties in this regard, a house on the San Jacinto River in Kingwood, has had 22 flood insurance claims totaling more than \$2.5 million since 1979. That's at least eight times what the house is worth, according to the data.

Most of the insurance payouts on that home could have been avoided if Houston had held to the federal requirement that it be elevated or torn down, the data suggest. The property first had a claim that reached the 50 percent threshold in 1989.

Everyone pays

The process of assessing substantial damage continues after Hurricane Harvey, and it's opaque.

Houston officials have mailed more than 2,200 notices of substantial damage to Harvey-affected homeowners. They say only whether a house is substantially damaged, but don't show the calculations used to make the determination. The city could not readily provide data that could be used to verify those assessments, or to determine whether the city is undercounting substantial damage. Officials said the information is spread out across too many departments and computers. In some cases, it's only in a paper file.

Houston will not reveal the addresses of substantially damaged buildings, citing privacy laws. The letters represent

only 1 percent of the 204,000 Houston homes and apartment complexes flooded in Harvey.

Like other communities, the city has few resources to police thousands of flood reconstruction permits at once, said Jamila Johnson, the city's flood plain administrator. A key problem, she said, is that FEMA will make a claim payout before a property owner gets rebuilding permits from the city. This results in untold amounts of unpermitted repairs and violations of elevation requirements.

"I just want the NFIP to be a better partner on enforcement," she said. "I know I'm not the only flood plain manager who says this."

FEMA officials have said they are shifting resources to better monitor the issue in cities that have large numbers of flood claims.

The extent of repetitive losses has long been known, but the Chronicle's analysis of federal data shows that manipulated damage assessments are a significant underlying problem.

"Nobody wants to tell a flood survivor, after they've lost everything, that, oh, by the way, you have to raise your house four feet," explained Chad Berginnis, executive director of the Association of State Floodplain Managers.

Or worse, tell them that they must leave their familiar neighborhood.

So calculations of damage become political instead of mathematical, because the federal government puts the burden of that decision on local officials, even when the home is federally insured.

Everyone pays for bad assessments. Americans pay in the costs of disasters. In higher flood waters as a result of buildings standing where they shouldn't be. In massive infrastructure projects to protect high-risk homes. By becoming tenants and owners of repaired buildings in high-risk areas where developers have turned a buck and left. And, most directly, in the costs of federally subsidized flood insurance and the U.S. treasury's billion-dollar bailouts of the program.

"The social cost of trying to defend buildings that are deep in the flood plain is really high, and probably not really fair to the rest of their neighbors," said David Conrad, a consultant with the flood plain managers association.

'Red flags all over'

Rare instances where local data is available demonstrate how easy it is to subvert the 50 percent rule.

A database of damage assessments from Galveston after Ike, paired with recollections by officials there, shows how officials lowballed thousands of assessments, placing homes back at risk near the waters that inundated them under a 19-foot storm surge.

Among more than 5,000 damage assessments citywide reviewed by the Chronicle, most of them were declared below

the 50 percent mark, including dozens of homes that took on eight to 15 feet of hurricane storm surge.

Five feet is usually enough to be considered major damage both by FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Even less water was needed to meet that threshold in Ike because drenched homes sat in the summer heat for 11 days while residents waited for authorities to let them back on the island, allowing mold and rot to set in.

Yet Galveston assessments bore almost no correlation to the depth of water inside the homes, which is usually a predictor of damage severity.

"Three feet or more water on the first floor will almost always throw a frame-built structure over 50 percent," said Paul Osman, flood plain manager for Illinois, a state known for adhering well to the 50 percent rule.

Osman took a virtual drive of Bayou Shore, where Bates lives, using Google Earth.

"Red flags are going off all over the place," he said. "There's a couple houses here that two feet of water should have thrown them over 50 percent ... I don't know how anybody at FEMA can't drive down Bayou Shore Drive and say, 'Whoa, what's going on here?' I just looked at it for 30 seconds and I can see it's a major problem."

Nevertheless, a one-story, 1,400-square-foot house that had seven feet of water and was gutted to the studs was declared only 28 percent damaged.

The months-long process of assessing damage across Galveston Island wore on, and residents' patience — waiting for insurance payouts, debris removal, contractors and permits — wore thin. Amid this uncertainty, all they wanted was a green light from the city to rebuild, recalled Elizabeth Beeton, a Galveston City Council member who witnessed this process in Ike's aftermath. "There's just tremendous pressure on local officials to accommodate their own constituents."

City staff could have held the line, but that would have meant forcing expensive elevation projects on people who couldn't afford it, ultimately kicking people out of town, and leaving homes to rot off the tax rolls. It can cost more than \$150,000 to raise a 2,000-square-foot house, and standard flood policies cover only \$30,000 of that.

So city officials gave in, Beeton said.

Julia Hatcher's house in Bayou Shore, valued at \$62,000, took on six feet of water. The city declared only \$25,000 in damages.

"One of the inspectors said to me something to the effect of, do you know how much it would cost if we rated everybody substantially damaged?" she recalled. "They just basically went around and lowballed damage for everybody so nobody would be substantially damaged. Everybody (on the street) was substantially damaged, in my opinion."

She was one of few who elevated her house anyway.

Over or under?

Catherine Gorman, the assistant planning director, said city staff bore tremendous stress. The first time she declared a house substantially damaged, the owner was in the permit office and had been waiting in a long line with other storm-ravaged residents seeking rebuilding permits. When the homeowner realized what the declaration meant, she collapsed on the floor. In the following months, Gorman and her staff would have thousands of those conversations with weary residents.

"Politically, the hardest part of their job is doing substantial damage determinations," said Berginnis, of the flood plain managers association. "I've been to places where communities are ready to repeal floodplain regulations entirely" to spare residents from such trauma, he said.

Arriving at a damage percentage is a complex process involving dozens of variables and calculations, often performed by FEMA-produced software. Local officials are supposed to determine the cost of bringing the building back to its pre-flood condition using labor and materials at market prices, even if the homeowner elects to do less work.

Yet many of the variables are open to interpretation, allowing the end result to be easily manipulated. A FEMA handbook gives local officials four options for determining market value, one of which is simply "estimates based on sound professional judgment made by the staff of the local building department." The one-two combo of a high appraisal of property value, paired with artificially low contractors' estimates, can guarantee a damage declaration below 50 percent.

In its assessments, Galveston surmised that none of the thousands of damaged island homes would cost more than \$65 per square foot to repair.

The Galveston staff had to assess tens of thousands of damaged properties via driving tours of the island, then whittle those down to the 5,000 or so that were thought to be close to 50 percent damaged. FEMA helped, but final determinations were up to a small staff, its members dealing with their own flooded homes. They heard appeals for months. Questioning the work of a licensed appraiser or contractor under such conditions was out of the question, Gorman said.

"We were not equipped to suddenly do permitting for an entire city," she said, adding, "Our goal was to get people back into their houses."

Sometimes, Beeton said, building officials outright asked residents which way they wanted to go – over 50 percent or under, she said.

Beeton herself urged city staff not to reject residents' appeals of substantial damage declarations in instances where their neighbors had come in under 50 percent, she said. Her district included Fish Village, and the result was that only a single home out of at least 300 was declared substantially damaged.

Ike spared little of the island, flooding about 80 percent of homes. It was the worst Galveston disaster since the nameless hurricane of 1900 killed roughly 8,000 people, whose bodies had to be burned in funeral pyres on the beach.

After that storm, the town's collective leadership raised the height of the entire city by an average of four feet, pumping in 1 million dump trucks worth of dredged sand and fortifying the island with a 17-foot seawall.

They also lifted 2,100 buildings.

'No accountability'

FEMA concluded as early as 1989 that bad damage assessments occurred because local officials "did not understand the regulation, failed to recognize the structure as substantially damaged, or simply neglected the responsibility of enforcement," according to an agency report.

"It's still an enormous problem," said Conrad, the flood plain managers consultant, who led one of few examinations of the issue when he was with the National Wildlife Federation in 1998. It's been poorly studied since.

Osman, the Illinois flood plain manager, called it "the most important component of flood plain management ... where we see the most effective reduction in flood losses — when you actually get out and do those damage assessments and stand by them and enforce them."

Despite early warnings from inside and outside government, the Chronicle's analysis shows the percentage of repetitively flooded properties with histories of substantial damage hasn't changed since Conrad's report 20 years ago – even as thousands more properties have joined the repeat loss list.

Insurance payouts to properties with past substantial damage have roughly doubled in that time.

Even as Congress prepares to reform the flood insurance program – or defer the reforms for the seventh time since September, only one of the proposals addresses oversight of substantial damage – it requires training of local officials but provides no new enforcement measures. FEMA doesn't track the issue, and neither do most local jurisdictions. In many communities that participate in the program, only paper records of damage assessments exist, even for recent floods, making databases like Galveston's rare.

FEMA didn't audit Galveston's handling of the substantial damage requirements in Hurricane Ike, even though the flood insurance program paid out more than \$800 million in claims there since 1978.

The agency did, however, audit the city's flood plain management program seven months before Ike, finding only 20 deficiencies mostly related to individual properties. A FEMA official wrote to the city manager: "The city continues to demonstrate that its floodplain program is conforming to

requirements and is very well managed.” It has not been audited since.

Its flood plain residents get 15 percent off insurance premiums because the city maintains a Class 7 rating from the flood insurance program for good performance.

‘No one’s serious’

FEMA and its affiliates at the state level cannot keep up with the more than 22,000 communities in the flood insurance program. Houston, the most flood-prone metropolis in the country, has not had an audit since before 2007. Yet it has among the best flood insurance program community ratings of large cities, a designation that provides residents with up to 25 percent off their flood insurance policies.

Miami hasn’t seen one in at least eight years. Only 23 percent of program communities have, a Reuters analysis found.

“No one’s really serious about preventing repetitive flooding,” Beeton, the council member, surmised. “If the federal government were serious about that, it would not leave it to local officials to make the decision about whether someone can rebuild or not – local officials who are in extreme distress.”

Under current law, local officials don’t get reimbursed by FEMA for building inspections after a disaster, so they don’t ask for help or make temporary hires, Berginnis, director of the flood plain managers association said. His group is lobbying Congress for a measure to change that.

FEMA has shifted much of the burden for audits onto the states, but funding is inconsistent.

In 2017, FEMA gave the state’s flood insurance program coordinator, the Texas Water Development Board, just \$332,000 for the program that includes audits. Five staff members are dedicated to that program. To audit Houston under the guidelines set out by FEMA, they would have to spend weeks just driving the flood plain to look for violations, plus more time reviewing thousands of building permit files, board spokeswoman Kimberly Leggett said.

Roy Wright, the outgoing flood insurance program administrator, said the agency was considering mandating more regular monitoring of places such as Harris County with large numbers of flood policies, and spending less time on rural areas with lower flood exposure. Those mandates could be tied to future grants to the state coordinating agencies.

Damage assessments are seldom publicly available, either due to poor data management or the use of privacy laws to block their release.

“It’s one of these areas where there’s virtually no public accountability,” said Rob Moore, a senior policy analyst at the Natural Resources Defense Council, which has issued several watchdog reports on the flood insurance program. “I suspect it’s one of these big problems that nobody at FEMA really wants to find out how extensive it is.”

Wright said he noticed substantial damage was a problem after floods in South Carolina in 2015 and Louisiana in 2016, largely because of inquiries from reporters in the affected communities.

“When I start hearing the same types of questions, that means I need to dive deeper in,” he said. “The questions kept coming and frankly there weren’t enough answers.”

He ordered a year-long review of program compliance issues, including substantial damage. The agency has not released a set of recommendations that resulted from that review.

He had no information on Galveston’s practices. FEMA officials have monitored Houston’s damage assessment processes since the storm hit, he said.

In the absence of greater help from FEMA, some states have developed a cooperative approach.

After severe flooding in Watseka, Illinois, in late February, a team of 18 flood plain officials from around the state assembled at city hall in the town of 5,000 people, where the building official would otherwise have been overwhelmed. In less than seven hours, they surveyed 676 buildings and identified 109 that needed more detailed substantial damage estimates.

They’d done this drill before, during another bout of flooding in Watseka three years earlier. Many homes then were declared substantially damaged and subsequently elevated.

None of them flooded this time.

Mark Collette finds the information the government and corporations don’t want you to see. Contact him at mark.collette@chron.com. Follow him on Twitter at @ChronMC.

Matt Dempsey contributed data analysis for this report.

How this story was reported

Officials at the local and federal level have long known, anecdotally, that enforcement of the “50 percent rule” has been a significant problem, leading to repeat flooding and higher debt for the National Flood Insurance Program. Local officials are supposed to tag buildings that have damages amounting to more than half their market value, then force them to be brought up to code, usually through elevation above the floodplain.

As the Houston Chronicle investigated the program after Harvey, it was clear that little has been done to address the lack of enforcement and to understand its contribution to the program’s billions in debt, and to repeat flooding.

The Chronicle interviewed 10 floodplain managers in six states whose communities had hit by heavy floods, and reviewed news reports and public policy papers stretching back decades to understand the scope of the problem. It also interviewed officials with the Association of State Floodplain

Managers, an organization with more than 6,000 members across the country.

[Click here to read the full methodology.](#)

Crews Battle Northern California Wildfire As Heat Wave Threatens

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

CYBER NEWS

DHS Touts Tech It Funded To Block Mobile Phishing

By Sean Lyngaas

[CyberScoop](#), July 5, 2018

A Department of Homeland Security-funded product designed to better protect mobile-phone users from phishing is becoming available to government and private-sector clients, the department said Thursday.

DHS's Science and Technology Directorate, which partially funded the tools made by mobile security company Lookout, hailed the product's ability to block phishing attempts and detect malware lurking in mobile applications. The beefed-up product, Lookout Mobile Endpoint Security, is now available for Android and iOS operating systems, the department said.

Phishing offers hackers a cheap and easy foothold into a network by exploiting people's trust in the internet. The rate at which victims are falling for phishing attacks on mobile devices has grown an average of 85 percent annually since 2011, according to a study by Lookout, which is based in San Francisco.

DHS is trying to lessen the threat to mobile users, including those in government, by investing in Lookout's technology, which the department said inspects all outbound network connections but does not read message content.

The technology will "greatly increase the security of the federal government's mobile systems for mission-critical activities," S&T program manager Vincent Sritapan said in a statement.

"Simply managing a mobile device is not enough to protect sensitive government information," Sritapan added. "The device also must have mobile endpoint security that alerts IT and security personnel to potential attacks."

The mobile-protection technology targets another common hacking scheme in which attackers lace popular mobile apps with malware. Last year alone, security specialists removed 700,000 malicious apps from the Google Play store.

In announcing the newly available product, DHS cast malicious apps as a clear and present danger to federal IT networks.

"Vulnerabilities discovered in new devices and apps may be used by hackers as vectors to access sensitive government information and attack legacy enterprise network systems," the department said. "[G]overnment mobile devices are an attractive avenue to attack backend systems containing data on millions of Americans and sensitive information relevant to government functions."

Lookout plans to add several security features to the mobile-security product, according to DHS, including greater detection of things like "man-in-the-middle" attacks.

DHS S&T Hails First-Ever Mobile Phishing Protection Feature

[MeriTalk](#), July 5, 2018

A mobile device security platform funded in part by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) has been updated with a never-before-seen feature to help tackle one of the most persistent problems in Federal agency cybersecurity.

San Francisco-based Lookout has added phishing protection to its Mobile Endpoint Security platform, and S&T today announced that an update to Lookout's platform—with the new mobile phishing feature and enhanced content protection capabilities—is being transitioned to the government and private sector and is now available for both iPhone and Android devices.

S&T calls it "an important new and first-of-its-kind feature for mobile devices" aimed at preventing the theft of user credentials or delivery of malware through bogus links. While emails have been the primary attack vector for phishing scams, their prevalence is growing in both mobile applications and SMS text messages.

"Beyond simply detecting phishing attempts in SMS messages, the system also detects and prevents attacks that hide inside mobile apps, social media messages, and in personal and corporate email," S&T said in a statement today. It added that the platform inspects connections at the network level, but doesn't inspect message content, preserving end-user privacy.

The Federal government has certainly had its fair share of trials attempting to educate employees on the dangers of phishing scams, and results have been mixed. More and more devices are connecting to Federal networks, leading to programs like DHS' Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation Program seeking to monitor growing network traffic.

But more devices mean a larger attack surface, and more potential entry points that bad actors can use to target Federal networks. A white paper released by Lookout in April found that the rate at which people fall for phishing attacks on

mobile phones has increased 85 percent every year since 2011.

"Simply managing a mobile device is not enough to protect sensitive government information," said S&T Mobile Security Research and Development Program Manager Vincent Sritapan. "The device also must have mobile endpoint security that alerts IT and security personnel to potential attacks. Without proper mobile security, agencies cannot adequately protect against data compromises."

In May, the National Institute of Standards and Technology issued a bulletin that suggested email was becoming "a more difficult medium for malicious entities to use as a penetration vector" and suggested that social media and web applications could be the next frontier for attacks. Lookout's new platform appears a step toward curbing that potential new exploit trend.

On the email front, it seems DHS is leading the charge to good effect. In October of last year, it issued a binding operational directive that required government agencies to adopt Domain-based Message Reporting, Authentication, and Conformance (DMARC), a protocol that combats phishing by authenticating the identity of an email's sender.

Recent research reveals that the Federal government leads other sectors in adopting this vital email safety tool, and a DHS official last month said that the agency is influencing the broader technology ecosystem to adopt better cybersecurity through tools like DMARC.

Verizon's annual Data Breach Investigations Report found that 93 percent of the incidents it investigated involved financial pretexting and phishing, and organizations are nearly three times more likely to get breached by social attacks than via actual network vulnerabilities. As phishing attacks travel from traditional email to other platforms like mobile, DHS appears ready to invest in new technologies to meet the threat at its new destination.

DHS S&T Enlists Cyber 20/20 To Enhance Cyber Security Capabilities For Financial Services

By Aaron Martin

[Homeland Preparedness News](#), July 5, 2018

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science & Technology Directorate (S&T) has awarded Cyber 20/20, Inc. a contract to enhance the capabilities of existing cybersecurity tools to detect and respond to malicious cybersecurity attacks on financial institutions.

Awarded under the first phase of DHS S&T's Silicon Valley Innovation Program (SVIP), the grant will provide Cyber 20/20 with an initial \$200,000 grant to develop proof of concept for the proposed technology.

The project will aim to enhance the ability of the Trained Using Runtime Analysis from Cuckoo Outputs (TURACO)

open-source sandbox that enables security analysts to force new applications to be run in isolation to contain and analyze malware attacks. Currently, TURACO pairs machine learning and existing capabilities to identify, analyze and anticipate malware attacks.

"As malware evolves, so must the technology we use to defend financial services networks," Greg Wigton, program manager for the Next Generation Cyber Infrastructure Apex program, said. "Using sandboxes to predict and prevent attacks increasingly has become popular over the past decade. Cyber 20/20 plans to create a next-generation open-source sandbox that leverages machine learning to adapt to evolving threats."

The SVIP makes up to \$800,000 in funding available to participating companies over four phases.

DNC Staffers Have 'PTSD' After 2016 Leak, Strive For Better Security Skills: CTO

By Andrew Blake

[Washington Times](#), July 5, 2018

Traumatized Democratic National Committee staffers have been trained to prevent being hacked by the same method used to breach the organization during the 2016 U.S. presidential race, the DNC's chief technology officer, Raffi Krikorian, said Tuesday.

"If we get hacked again it won't happen like how it happened in 2016," Mr. Krikorian told CyberScoop.

"People have such PTSD about what happened in 2016 that there's a real desire to improve [security] here," he said in a phone interview. "If we can just raise the baseline security of most people and the campaigns, if we can do the simple things right, then it will have a disproportionately positive effect."

Hackers breached the DNC and other Democratic targets during the 2016 race by sending malicious emails that ultimately allowed attackers to infiltrate the network and steal thousands of internal documents and emails later published online by WikiLeaks, according to security researchers. U.S. intelligence officials have since assessed with high confidence that Russian state-sponsored hackers carried out the attacks in an attempt to sow discord and disrupt the campaign of President Trump's opponent, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton.

Mr. Krikorian began subjecting DNC staffers to cybersecurity training last year that involved simulating the "spear-phishing" attacks allegedly used by Russian hackers, Wired previously reported. While fears of further election meddling still linger nearly four months until the 2018 midterm elections, however, Mr. Krikorian said the most of the organization's employees are equipped to identify and avert malicious emails like the ones sent prior to Mr. Trump's election.

"Nearly 80 percent of our users are now either not clicking or at least asking questions about it beforehand," said Mr. Krikorian. "Being realistic we'll probably never get to 100 percent compliance but we're working on it ... it's important that people flag something, anything that seems suspicious"

"We're at a point now where recently when our CFO sent a staff email it included the line 'this is not a phishing email.' That's how aware people are of the threat, today," he added.

In addition to breaching the DNC, Russian hackers successfully infiltrated the email account of John Podesta, the chairman of Mrs. Clinton's campaign, and stole emails subsequently published by WikiLeaks, U.S. intelligence officials have concluded.

Previous research revealed that the hackers who launched the spear-phishing attack that claimed Mr. Podesta sent malicious emails to scores of recipients including DNC staffers and other members of the Hillary for America presidential campaign, as well as former U.S. and foreign military and diplomatic officials, among others.

More recently, the Department of Homeland Security and FBI said in March 2018 that Russian state-sponsored hackers conducted spear-phishing operations during the course of successfully breaching U.S. energy sector networks. In April, meanwhile, DHS said it failed so far to find any evidence of Russian hackers attacking U.S. voting systems ahead of the November midterms, notwithstanding concerns from members of the president's administration.

"We have seen Russian activity and intentions to have an impact on the next election cycle," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told the Senate Intelligence Committee in February while he was then serving as Mr. Trump's CIA director.

DNC Measures Cybersecurity Progress Since 2016 Breach

A daily briefing on politics and cybersecurity

By Tim Starks

[Politico Morning Cybersecurity](#), July 5, 2018

NEVER AGAIN(?) — With the midterms now just four months away, DNC staffers are getting better at flagging phishing emails, to the point where 80 percent of DNC staffers don't click the links right away. "People have such PTSD about what happened in 2016 that there's a real desire to improve [security] here," DNC Chief Technology Officer Raffi Krikorian told CyberScoop. Krikorian, who joined the DNC in June 2017 after serving in senior tech roles at Twitter and Uber, distributed a short cybersecurity checklist that includes recommendations like regularly updating smartphone apps, encrypting laptop hard drives and using two-factor authentication. "If we can do the simple things right," Krikorian said, "than it will have a disproportionately positive effect." As one threat intelligence analyst pointed out,

however, shoring up these basic vulnerabilities "may help against commodity threats but not targeted and persistent adversaries."

Krikorian's biggest challenge has been changing the security and technology culture at the DNC, he said on the latest episode of the progressive podcast The Great Battlefield. "Making the party secure and getting over the wounds of the hack of '16 is a cultural issue," he said. There is also a lot of "technical debt," he said, meaning vulnerabilities and inadequacies that have carried over from previous cycles and compounded the problem. "There's a lack of documentation, there's a lack of process," he added. But at the end of the day, "you can have the best technical defenses, but the weakest link could be your people. ... So culture change is probably one of the biggest things that we need to execute on."

Another problem for the DNC, according to Krikorian, is that other Democratic organizations rely too heavily on the national party's tech team for help. "All other groups have effectively abdicated their responsibilities to think about technology to the [DNC] technology team," he said on The Great Battlefield. "A lot of what we've been trying to do recently is trying to figure out how to push technical thinking back out to every [other] group." Krikorian also said his team was "definitely underfunded" and that getting donors to pitch in for sorely needed but unsexy tech projects was "one of our biggest challenges." Even so, he praised DNC Chairman Tom Perez for taking technology seriously: "We have, if not the largest, tied for the largest budget at the party right now. It's a bigger budget than [has] ever [been] given before to [the] technology team. It's just, we've also found ourselves mired in technical debt."

HAPPY THURSDAY and welcome to Morning Cybersecurity! Hope you all had a fulfilling day of celebrating Murica. Send your thoughts, feedback and especially tips to tstarks@politico.com, and be sure to follow @POLITICOPro and @MorningCybersec. Full team info below.

WE CAN WORK IT OUT — Cybercrime issues like information sharing and law enforcement cooperation may come up during President Donald Trump's July 16 meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, according to a Russian diplomat. "Probably that will be discussed as a bilateral relations issue rather than hacking in general," Ilya Rogachev, head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Department for New Challenges and Threats, told the Russian news agency TASS.

Cooperation between the U.S. and Russia on fighting cybercrime, never particularly robust, has essentially been nonexistent since the U.S. withdrew from a working group following Putin's invasion of Crimea. Moscow regularly protects Russian cyber criminals indicted in American courts. After the two presidents' last meeting, Trump said they had discussed creating "an impenetrable Cyber Security unit," but

he quickly backtracked on the idea after experts savaged and ridiculed the notion. As for the other top cyber issue, election meddling, the Russian foreign ministry still maintains that it's all a fiction. U.S. officials "believe that we somehow interfered in the election through the unlawful use of information and communications technologies," Rogachev noted, "although they cannot or do not want to explain what they mean."

DHS SOLICITS CYBER FEEDBACK — DHS is kicking off its every-other-year assessment of cybersecurity vulnerabilities across the country, in a formal request publishing in the Federal Register today. The Nationwide Cyber Security Review dates back to a fiscal 2010 DHS spending bill, and is designed to help state, local, tribal and territorial governments to manage their cybersecurity risks. Relying on anonymous, voluntary survey responses, "DHS delivers a bi-annual summary report to Congress that provides a broad picture of the current cybersecurity gaps & capabilities of SLTT governments across the nation," according to the Federal Register notice. Beyond noting the survey time frame starting in October and ending tentatively in December, the Federal Register notice also seeks feedback within 60 days on the kind of information DHS ought to be collecting.

CHARMING KITTEN ON THE PROWL — An Iranian hacking group tried posing as the Israeli cybersecurity firm that detailed some of its operations, according to the company, ClearSky Security. The group, alternately and hilariously known by such names as Charming Kitten or Newsbeef, wanted to conduct spear phishing campaigns against people trying to read ClearSky reports about its hacking operations. "Charming Kitten built a phishing website impersonating our company," ClearSky said this week. "They copied pages from our public website and changed one of them to include a 'sign in' option with multiple services." ClearSky appeared to catch Charming Kitten in the act, as the website was never finished and ultimately taken down.

HELLO, IS SOMEONE THERE? — Think your phone is secretly recording you? You may be on to something. A group of Northeastern University computer scientists conducted research to find out whether popular apps were using the phone's mic to record audio and send it to third parties looking to use that information for targeted ads. Contrary to the views of conspiracy theorists, researchers found no instances of phones surreptitiously recording conversations. But, they did find that some apps could record a phone screen and transmit that information to third parties.

"Of the 17,260 apps the researchers looked at, over 9,000 had permission to access the camera and microphone and thus the potential to overhear the phone's owner talking about their need for cat litter or about how much they love a certain brand of gelato," according to Gizmodo. But they didn't detect any eavesdropping. "The strange practice they

started to see was that screenshots and video recordings of what people were doing in apps were being sent to third party domains." Some companies already boast about this ability. Appsee, a visual analytics platform, claims it can record a user's every "tap, swipe and action." Apps that can use Appsee's screen recording services without being detected — which is a violation of the Google Play Store policy — are raising new concerns about mobile privacy and security. The researchers will present their findings at the Privacy Enhancing Technology Symposium Conference in Barcelona in August.

HUAWEI SEES ALLIES IN FCC DOCKET — From our friends at Morning Tech: The second wave of comments in response to the FCC's proposal to bar telecom subsidy money from being used to buy equipment or service from companies deemed a threat to national security (read: China's Huawei and ZTE, Russia's Kaspersky Labs) arrived earlier this week. And Huawei is telling commissioners to count all the opposition. "Most commenters agree that the FCC's authority over the Universal Service Fund does not encompass national-security concerns," the Chinese telecom giant, the only potentially barred company to file in the docket, wrote in 118 pages of comments posted Tuesday. "The comments show that a wide range of alternatives is available to the Commission." It cited a dozen other commenters opposing the proposal, many of which represent small telecom companies that rely on Huawei's offerings, and warned the plan could "particularly harm Americans in remote and low-income Areas."

The Telecom Industry Association, which backs the FCC proposal, countered that U.S. expert agencies have already concluded Huawei is a threat. The trade group, which represents equipment manufacturers, told the commission it sympathizes with those U.S. telecom companies that may be affected but also judged the impact relatively small: "Huawei and ZTE's combined share of the U.S. wireless infrastructure market appears to ... be approximately one half of one percent or less."

FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING — Now there's proof of police requesting — and apparently successfully using — the iPhone-cracking tool known as GrayKey to unlock devices, Forbes reported. Court documents show that the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for New York employed GrayKey to unlock a pair of iPhones belonging to a suspect accused of selling crack to an undercover officer. The case adds yet another wrinkle to the ongoing encryption debate between the tech community and law enforcement.

RECENTLY ON PRO CYBERSECURITY — The Senate Intelligence Committee found that Russia's efforts to interfere in the 2016 election went beyond even what U.S. spy agencies revealed. ... Election Assistance Commission commissioners, other agency leaders and voting machine makers will testify at the Senate Rules Committee's election

security hearing next week. ... A former House Democratic IT staffer who Trump slammed pleaded guilty to fraud, but the Justice Department found no foreign intelligence connection as Republican conspiracy theorists alleged. ... Trump tweeted that the NSA's improper collection of phone record data was a "disgrace," but tied it to special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation in a way that went unexplained.

TWEET OF THE DAY — "Quick, everyone put on pants!"

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

— Tony Vizza was appointed director of cybersecurity advocacy for the Asia-Pacific region at (ISC)², an international nonprofit association.

QUICK BYTES

— The North American Electric Reliability Corp. expects electricity grid attacks to increase. E&E News

— Many federal employees who bring their own devices to work do it without their agencies' approval. Nextgov

— DHS's science and technology wing awarded a contract to a company to see whether its technology could better defend the financial services sector. Nextgov

— It might've been a hack, but either way someone is fiddling with internet booths in New York to make them play ice cream truck music during scalding heat. Motherboard

— Four in 10 U.K. chief executive officers believe their companies will suffer a cyberattack. IT PRO

That's all for today. MURICA.

Having More Control Over Your Data Doesn't Mean It's Safe

By Kaya Yurieff

[CNN Money](#), July 5, 2018

California's new data protection law gives consumers sweeping control over how much personal information companies can collect. It lets people opt out of having their data collected entirely, and even makes it easier to sue companies in the wake of a data breach.

But none of that guarantees any of that data is safe.

Although some privacy advocates hail the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018 as a model for other states to follow, the legislation says little about what must be done to protect all that data once companies have it.

Big players like Facebook (FB) or Google (GOOG) have robust security protocols and entire teams dedicated to keeping hackers and thieves at bay. But there are an untold number of tech companies, marketing firms, and others that hold troves of information and may not have the resources to ensure its safekeeping.

That point was reinforced with news that Exactis, a data marketing firm in Florida with four employees, inadvertently

exposed a database containing personal information on about 230 million consumers and 110 million businesses. The dataset included phone numbers, email addresses, home addresses, and even things like hobbies and political contributions.

Security researcher Vinny Troia discovered the leak, first reported by Wired, and confirmed his findings to CNNMoney. Exactis CEO Steve Hardigree told CNNMoney that his company corrected the problem immediately after Troia identified it, and said there is no indication anyone accessed the information. He also stressed that the company does not collect sensitive information like Social Security numbers or credit card information.

Exactis is just one of many companies compiling large datasets. "It's not a unique business," Troia said. "In this case, they just got caught with the door open."

Two days after news of that leak broke, a data breach at the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training at Texas State University exposed the personal information of thousands of law enforcement officers. In that case, which was first reported by ZDNet, the personal info was stored on an unsecured web server, a university spokesman told CNNMoney.

Data breaches can happen to anyone, of course – just ask Equifax (EFX), which experienced a hack that exposed the personal information of over 147 million people last fall. Such incidents show that, by and large, the US is "totally unprepared" to address them, said security expert James Norton. He was the deputy assistant secretary of legislative affairs at the Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush and helped launch the department's first cybersecurity team.

"These things are happening so fast and so furiously that we're not in a place to deal with it, whether at the government level, personal level or private sector level," he said. "Unless there's a requirement to protect the data – whether it's a federal mandate or comes from the consumer – I'm not sure it's going to change."

The California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018 makes some effort to address that. It specifically states that any consumer whose "nonencrypted or nonredacted personal information" is compromised "as a result of the business' violation of the duty to implement and maintain reasonable security procedures and practices appropriate to the nature of the information" can sue for damages.

"Essentially it requires companies to follow reasonable security procedures, and to protect the information by encrypting or redacting it," said a spokesperson for California state Senator Robert Hertzberg, who co-authored the law. "For anything that is not laid out in the bill, it is likely that those regulations and procedures will be developed by the attorney general over the next 18 months before the bill goes into effect."

Working out those details is important, because many companies that collect personal data continue making “fundamental mistakes” in how they protect it, said Richard Forno, assistant director of the UMBC Center for Cybersecurity.

“In 2018, we should not be seeing these types of incidents and breaches,” he said.

California’s law is not quite as expansive as the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation. But even Europe’s tougher regulations can’t do much to prevent leaks and breaches, because they don’t require companies to tell consumers they have your data, according to Troia.

Ensuring 100% security is impossible. “However, we do have to keep trying to reach that goal,” Forno said. To that end, he and other security experts said companies should follow established best practices like encrypting data, drafting comprehensive security protocols, and alerting consumers to breaches. Such things won’t stop breaches, but, like locking a front door or installing an alarm, they will make it much harder for the bad guys to get in – which is the whole point.

NIST To Conduct Workshop On Federal IoT Security, Risk Management

By Joanna Crews

[ExecutiveGov](#), July 5, 2018

The National Institute of Standards and Technology will hold a workshop on July 11 to gather stakeholder insights on cybersecurity and risk management for devices connected to the internet of things.

The Considerations for Managing IoT Cybersecurity and Privacy Risks Workshop will help NIST develop federal guidelines on the protection of connected devices and environments in relation to the NIST Special Publication 800-53 and the Cybersecurity Framework, the event agenda detailed.

Topics for discussion include the use of information technology cybersecurity controls; risk considerations, identification and management; baselines and overlays; a model proposal and botnet report roadmap.

The NIST intends to provide publications on the Cybersecurity for IoT Program and the Privacy Engineering Program to assist agencies in efforts to comply with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act.

Exclusive: Russia’s Telecoms Security Push Hits Snag

By Maria Kolomychenko

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Israel Charges Former Employee Of NSO Group With Cyber Crimes

By Tova Cohen

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Former NSO Group Employee Accused Of Stealing Phone Spy Tools

By Dell Cameron

[Gizmodo](#), July 5, 2018

Israeli hacking firm NSO Group is mostly known for peddling top-shelf malware capable of remotely cracking into iPhones. But according to Israeli authorities, the company’s invasive mobile spy tools could have wound up in the hands of someone equally, if not far more, devious than its typical government clients.

A 38-year-old former NSO employee has been accused of stealing the firm’s malware and attempting to sell it for \$50 million in cryptocurrency on the dark net, according to a widely reported indictment first published by Israeli press.

The stolen software is said to be worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

According to Israel’s Justice Ministry, the ex-employee was turned in by a potential buyer. The suspect was arrested on June 5, Reuters reported. The accused has been charged with employee theft, attempting to sell security tools without a license, and conduct that could harm state security.

The accused former employee’s name has not been released.

The near leak of NSO’s malware underscores the risk such tools pose, regardless of the measures taken by developers to keep them secure, should they fall into the hands of criminals or nation states prone to surveilling journalists and dissidents. (Motherboard reported in June 2017 that NSO sold spyware to a customer in Mexico who then used it to target reporters.)

“Today nobody is safe from a wide spectrum of malicious insider activities,” said Ilia Kolochenko, CEO and founder of web security company High-Tech Bridge. “Four-eyes principles, anomaly detection, role-based access to sensitive data and two-factor authentication, continuous monitoring and employee vetting can substantially reduce those risks, but not eliminate them.”

In May, Reuters reported that, in a deal worth about \$1 billion, U.S.-based software company Verint Systems was in talks to merge its security division with NSO, citing an anonymous source. The deal was previously reported by The Wall Street Journal.

NSO could not be immediately reached for comment.

Alexa, Can Voice Assistants Introduce Corporate Cybersecurity Risks?

By Angus Loten

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Congress Pushes For A Clearer Strategy On Cyber Warfare

[MeriTalk](#), July 5, 2018

Amid growing fears of large-scale cyberattacks—ranging from attacks on infrastructure, to cyber espionage that threatens national security, to a “terabyte of death”—Congressional lawmakers are calling for a more clearly defined strategy for responding to such attacks.

The Senate’s version of the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was approved with changes and sent back to the House on June 18 and heads to conference next week to reconcile differences between the two chambers. It calls on the executive branch to “plan, develop, and demonstrate” how the United States could respond to cyberattacks that threaten the political integrity, economic, or national security of the United States. The legislation notes that its provision refers to attacks originating from foreign powers, specifically mentioning Russia in one section.

The bill would up the pressure to establish a policy on what cyber activity constitutes an act of war—as opposed to the thousands of attacks the Department of Defense and other agencies see every day—and what are the options for response.

Pentagon leaders have for years struggled to define cyberwar in terms of what level of cyberattack would warrant a military response, and whether a response would be in cyberspace or include the use of kinetic weapons. The DoD Cyber Strategy of 2015 states that the “United States has been clear that it will respond to a cyberattack on U.S. interests through its defense capabilities,” but is not particularly clear about what would prompt retaliation or what shape retaliation would take. It says only that response would come “at a time, in a manner, and in a place of our choosing, using appropriate instruments of U.S. power and in accordance with applicable law.”

Among other factors, the difficulty in attributing the origin of a cyberattack has complicated the question of ordering a response.

As far as launching cyberattacks, U.S. Cyber Command has control of DoD’s offensive (as well as defensive) cyber operations, although Presidential Policy Directive 20 currently gives the President sole power to authorize cyberattacks that could damage another country’s assets.

While the NDAA would add requirements to that power, some lawmakers and others say that DoD should also have

the ability to respond in-kind to cyberattacks, an idea with which others have agreed. Mike Mullen, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs, has argued that the Cyber Command, which in May was elevated to a unified combatant command, should be empowered to run offensive operations on its own.

Some members in Congress—particularly Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.—have for years criticized the White House for its cybersecurity policy, calling for a more clearly defined strategy that outlines response and delineates who is responsible for making the decisions to retaliate. In March, lawmakers complained that the lack of a clear strategy has resulted in inaction in the wake of attacks from Russia and elsewhere, making the United States, as Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, has put it, “the cyber punching bag of the world.”

The NDAA—a funding plan that maps out priorities—also calls for other cyber-related measures including greater coordination between DoD and the Department of Homeland Security on infrastructure protection, setting guidelines for research and development, and completing the transfer of a number of cyber responsibilities from the Defense Information Systems Agency to the Cyber Command. Research firm Skopos Labs gives the bill a 97 percent chance of passing.

How Companies Can Bridge The Culture Gap When Hiring Ex-Military Cybersecurity Professionals

By Adam Janofsky And Kim S. Nash

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

How The Army Will Infuse Cyber Operations On The Battlefield

By Mark Pomerleau

[C4ISR & Networks](#), July 5, 2018

Imagine a brigade combat team readying an assault on a small town in Eastern Europe. As part of the planning, cyber and electromagnetic activities (CEMA) staff recommend knocking out Wi-Fi connections in the town to prevent residents and forces from communicating prior to or during the operation.

Today, planners must submit a request for such capabilities through their higher echelons, which slows down the operation.

But the Army is experimenting with how to insert these capabilities at lower levels to accelerate decision-making. The pilot, sponsored by Army Cyber Command, is called CEMA Support to Corps and Below (CSCB). The program, now in its eighth rotation at combat training centers, is testing a concept of expeditionary cyber teams (ECT), an added element that includes new offensive and defensive planners on the brigade

staff and offensive operators that will travel with the tactical maneuver forces, typically at the company level.

Traditionally, cyber capabilities across the Department of Defense have resided in remote sanctuaries at the strategic level requiring a high level of authority, meaning any time a brigade commander wants to employ a cyber capability, cyber planners on the brigade staff must request from higher echelons slowing the decision cycle.

The pilot essentially has two goals, said Matt Funk, CSCB exercise planner. The first is to inform Army doctrine for tactical cyber to include recommendations on force structure and necessary infrastructure changes at training centers to better represent cyber capabilities. The second is to improve how these experimental teams operate within a brigade.

Fifth Domain recently visited the National Training Center at Fort Irwin in California to observe the pilot as ECTs were attached to the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

"We know that the enemies, or potential enemies of the United States, have that [cyber] capability, so we have to defend against it. Not only our networks, but then we also have to be able to exploit that," Brig. Gen. Jeff Broadwater, commander of Fort Irwin, told Fifth Domain.

"What the brigade is looking at is ... are there ways we might be able to exploit an opportunity with cyber while protecting our systems that help us communicate in other areas in order to achieve the effect that we want to."

The CEMA cell's job is to provide cyber and electronic warfare options to the commander to get at their objective. Army Cyber is validating how well these cells and planners are integrated with the brigade staff. Is the traditional brigade staff coming to them first, as opposed to the cell having to raise its hand? If so, exercise officials consider that a win.

It's about providing options — both offensively and defensively — to the commander.

"What these guys bring to the table is extraordinary," Capt. Daniel Oconer, the brigade's CEMA officer, said. "If you think about it like a card game, they're giving me options, they're giving the brigade commander options to gain that tactical edge against our adversaries."

Without access to these tactical cyber teams, Oconer explained he would have to understand the intent of the commander, what effect he wants and then submit that in a formal request, letting the higher echelons determine if they can provide that effect.

Currently, both the CEMA planners and the brigade have immediate access to these effects. If, however, a more robust, remote capability is still needed, the CEMA team will make a request to higher echelons.

Funk said throughout the eight rotations of the pilot thus far, the biggest lessons learned is that CEMA, cyber and EW

are no different than any of the other intelligence disciplines or capabilities.

"It's just a matter of working with the staff to get them thinking about CEMA," he said.

What is an ECT?

Some Defense Department officials have pointed to the parallels between the ECT and the integration of joint terminal attack controllers: highly skilled Air Force personnel that call in airstrikes from the ground. While it took a while for Army units to be comfortable with JTACs, this is now common practice.

Eventually, officials said, ECTs will need to earn trust with the brigade and, in the long run, might be common practice.

"At the end of the day, we're really here to help train and integrate with the brigade," Funk said. "If we walk away from here and the bridge feels like they have a better understanding of how to plan for and implement CEMA effects, then we consider that a win."

At its core, the team consists of the expeditionary portion — offensive cyber operators that generate the effects and maneuver in the field with a company — and offensive and defensive planners that will be embedded with the organic CEMA cell at the brigade staff to help plan the operation and effects.

On the defensive side, the team includes a defensive planner that coordinates with the brigade's network personnel. It also works with the cyber protection brigade that helps monitor the health of the brigade's networks that are being strained from constant probing of an opposing force replicating a near-peer threat.

Col. Robert Magee, who leads the 3rd ABCT, told Fifth Domain that even beyond staff level planning, the capabilities the ECTs can bring to bear have to be practiced at home station with the brigade because if the brigade doesn't see how it works, they won't get it.

Funk said part of the evaluation is how well the ECTs tactically maneuver with units in the field.

Exercise staff want to make sure they can perform their cyber tasks without being physically seen by the enemy and compromising their position.

What teams can provide for a commander

ECT planners look at infrastructure in the environment prior to an operation to figure out what they can exploit, Funk said.

Are there cybercafes, IP cameras, traffic cameras, security cameras, some type of communications network, Funk asked.

This is not much different than a scout or artillery, Funk said.

"I want access to those teams as a brigade commander. It's how do we leverage that for all of our operations in the future," Magee said. "What [the cyber teams

are] really doing for me right now is they're actually hacking some of the systems that are out here and allowing me to get eyes into places I normally wouldn't be able to get eyes.

"What the cyber team did [is] give me a way to double up on intel platforms in a way that I haven't been able to do before," Magee said.

In one training exercise, Magee said he had a pretty good picture of what was inside a town by fusing aerial, ground human and cyber intelligence.

What's next for the program?

Funk said the current plan is to continue about two rotations of the CSCB pilot per year.

He also explained that, next year, they hope to do a rotation at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Germany for the first time, which will involve coalition partners and game out the same integration issues, but now in a coalition environment.

TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS

More Than 10 Percent Of Americans Charged With Supporting ISIS Served In Military

By Gabriella Muñoz

[Washington Times](#), July 5, 2018

Slightly more than 10 percent of Americans who are arrested on charges of providing or trying to provide support to the Islamic State have served in the U.S. armed forces, a study says.

Fordham University's Center on National Security examined cases from March 2014, when the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria became a serious global threat, through August 2017. The researchers identified 144 investigations of Americans trying to help the Islamic State. Of those cases, 135 resulted in charges with 77 convictions.

Since the report was published, the total number of U.S.-based Islamic State prosecutions has risen to 162, according to a fact sheet provided to The Washington Times. Of those charged, 17 had served in the U.S. military, including one Iraqi who worked as a translator.

"Cases involving individuals with military history or training have been a constant yet small share of ISIS prosecutions over time. Some of the earliest cases had military backgrounds, and some of the most recent had military backgrounds as well," the Center on National Security's fact sheet reads.

Five of the 17 had served short times in the military, and three of them did not advance beyond basic training. Eleven veterans tried to join Islamic State after leaving the armed forces.

Only one-active duty soldier, Ikaika Kang, has been captured. He was serving in Hawaii and was arrested in a sting.

One of the most recent cases involved a Marine who was discharged for not disclosing health concerns. The Justice Department announced June 4 that Everitt Aaron Jameson pleaded guilty to trying to provide support to the Islamic State.

"Jameson stated that he was ready to do whatever they need done here and noted that his time in the military had trained him for combat and things of war," the Justice Department said in a press release.

Karen J. Greenberg, director of the Center on National Security at Fordham University, said the Islamic State cases involving military personnel "ran the gamut" of potential threats. Some were arrested in sting operations, while others were plotting credible attacks.

Ms. Greenberg said many of these individuals sought to "be involved with some sort of military endeavor" and that being associated with the military was part of their radicalization process.

Patrick James, project manager at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism, said Fordham University's report is similar to data from his organization.

Mr. James works on the consortium's Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States project, which examined cases from 2013 through 2016 and found 149 instances of U.S.-based Islamic State supporters, nine of whom were former U.S. military members.

"It wasn't all that surprising, honestly," he said of Fordham's report. "It seemed like that was pretty in line with what we expected."

The Department of Veterans Affairs declined to comment on policies for assessing veterans for radicalization and referred inquiries to the Department of Homeland Security, which is tasked in part with rooting out potential homegrown terrorists. The FBI also declined to comment and referred questions to Homeland Security and the Defense Department.

A Homeland Security spokeswoman said the agency has no specific policy for monitoring radicalization of former military personnel.

"DHS terrorism prevention programs are not targeted to a specific audience; rather, they are designed to be applicable to a variety of audiences and can be tailored as appropriate," said Lesley Fulop.

'Clear outliers'

The Defense Department, however, has policies aimed at preventing radicalization within the ranks.

Air Force Maj. Carla Gleason, a Pentagon spokeswoman, explained that Defense Department instruction 1325.06 addresses dissident behavior. While the policy is more commonly used for issues of white supremacy, it prohibits military personnel from "actively advocating

supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology or causes.”

Maj. Gleason said the policy authorizes commanders to use the “full range of administrative and disciplinary actions,” including criminal proceedings. Counseling, reprimands, orders and performance evaluations are methods to deter radicalization.

“It is DoD policy that the military departments ensure that the policy and procedures on prohibited activities in this instruction are included in initial active-duty training, precommissioning training, professional military education, commander training and other appropriate service training programs,” Maj. Gleason said.

Seth Jones, a senior adviser in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, noted that soldiers are under high levels of stress. Issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, physical injury, divorce and suicidal thoughts take tolls on military personnel, he said.

“It’s a jump to get from that level to terrorism, but it does mean that soldiers have had additional levels of stress, certainly over the past two decades,” Mr. Jones said.

The National Consortium’s Mr. James suggested that those who receive sympathy from Islamic State could be swayed by the terrorist group’s high-tech marketing efforts.

“A lot of the content [Islamic State operatives] put out really emphasizes the idea of gaining adventure, gaining personal significance, going off and finding an exotic place,” he said.

Mr. Jones said former military members did not pose most of the serious threats, in terms of potential damage and likelihood of success. He noted that Islamic State does try to inspire military and law enforcement to attack but is more focused on targeting them for violence.

“I think that’s been the more primary push from ISIS is more targeting [of military and law enforcement] than recruiting,” he said.

Richard Rudnick, director of operations at the National Veterans Foundation, said he wasn’t surprised that “a small handful” of people took an extreme path.

Mr. Rudnick, who served in the Navy in the late 1970s, said his experience in the military exposed him to people with extreme views on the left and the right.

Joe Penzler, director of media relations for the American Legion and a former Marine, said the military can take in extremists from time to time, but he stressed that the large majority of veterans stand by their commitments to the country.

“These are clear outliers,” he said. “Most veterans will tell you when you raise your right hand in the air, and you swear an oath to protect the Constitution of the United States, that oath doesn’t end when you leave active duty.”

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev Lawyers Seek To Unseal Interview With Brother’s Associate

[Boston Herald](#), July 5, 2018

Appellate lawyers for Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev are fighting to get their hands on sealed interviews with Ibragim Todashev, a Chechen national who was fatally shot by an FBI agent after allegedly confessing that he and Tsarnaev’s late brother Tamerlan were behind an unsolved triple murder in Waltham.

The attorneys, whose argument for sparing Tsarnaev’s life is due next month before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in Boston, filed a motion with the court late Tuesday asking that the reasons for their request be sealed, as well.

Todashev knew Tamerlan Tsarnaev, 26, from a mixed-martial arts gym in Boston where both had trained. Todashev was fatally shot in Orlando, Fla., on May 22, 2013, one month after the brothers’ terrorist attack on Copley Square, while being interviewed by the FBI.

Tsarnaev’s legal team seek “reports and recordings of interviews of Ibragim Todashev” that are part of “still-sealed proceedings in the district court” where their client was tried and sentenced to death in 2015, their initial motion states.

They note, however, that the request could be a moot point if a district court judge agrees to unseal the Todashev material.

Tsarnaev’s original defense team was forbidden by U.S. District Court Judge George A. O’Toole Jr. to introduce the 2011 Waltham killings as a way to suggest to jurors that Tsarnaev was a manipulated puppet of his older brother.

After personally reviewing the FBI’s transcripts, audio and video of its interviews with Todashev, O’Toole remarked he might have ruled in the defense’s favor, “if Todashev were available as a potential witness.”

Tsarnaev, 24, of Cambridge, has been on death row for three years at the federal Supermax prison in Florence, Colo., for the terrorist bombings at the marathon finish line in Copley Square on April 15, 2013, that killed spectators Martin Richard, Krystle Marie Campbell and Lingzi Lu, and severely maimed or injured hundreds others.

The former University of Massachusetts Dartmouth student was also convicted of murdering Massachusetts Institute of Technology police officer Sean Collier while attempting to evade capture with his brother three days later.

Tamerlan Tsarnaev died that night from injuries he suffered in a firefight with police in Watertown.

Federal prosecutors told Dzhokhar Tsarnaev’s attorneys they had “no evidence” of his brother’s involvement in the gruesome deaths of Raphael Teken, 37, and Erik Weissman, 31, both of Cambridge, and Brendan Mess, 25, of Waltham. The men’s bodies were found in Mess’s apartment Sept. 12, 2011.

Lawyers For Boston Marathon Bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev Want The Todashev Tapes

By Travis Andersen

[Boston Globe](#), July 5, 2018

Lawyers challenging the death sentence of Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev are seeking recordings of law enforcement interviews with a triple-homicide suspect who was killed in a 2013 confrontation with authorities.

In a document submitted Tuesday with the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in Boston, attorneys for Tsarnaev requested permission to file their motion for “reports and recordings of interviews of Ibragim Todashev” under seal.

The filing did not indicate why Tsarnaev’s appellate team wants to review the Todashev materials.

Todashev was a 27-year-old mixed-martial-arts fighter when he allegedly confessed to Massachusetts State Police and FBI agents in May 2013 that he and Tsarnaev’s older brother, Tamerlan, had participated in the slayings of three men in Waltham in 2011.

Shortly after the confession, Todashev was fatally shot by an FBI agent after Todashev allegedly charged at the agent and a state trooper with a metal broomstick.

No one has been charged in connection with the Waltham murders.

Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev set off the bombs that killed three people, including an 8-year-old boy, and wounded hundreds more during the Boston Marathon in April 2013. Tamerlan was killed during a clash with police in Watertown days after the blasts.

The brothers, who lived in Cambridge, also killed an MIT police officer while they were on the run.

Dzhokhar was convicted for his role in the Marathon attack and sentenced to death in 2015. His appeal is pending.

The 24-year-old is being held at a federal supermax prison in Colorado.

Tsarnaev Lawyers Seek Interviews With Brother’s Associate

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

BOSTON (AP) – Appeals lawyers for convicted Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev are asking for the recordings of interviews with a suspect in a triple-homicide in Massachusetts who was shot in 2013 during a confrontation with police.

The attorneys for the death-row inmate, whose argument for sparing Tsarnaev’s life is due next month before the 1st U.S. Court of Appeals, filed the motion for the sealed recordings of Ibragim Todashev on Tuesday without spelling out their reasons for asking.

Todashev knew Dzhokhar Tsarnaev’s older brother, Tamerlan, because they trained at the same Boston-area mixed martial arts gym.

He allegedly told police about a month after the marathon bombing that he and Tamerlan Tsarnaev had killed three men in Waltham in 2011, a crime that remains unsolved.

Todashev was fatally shot by an FBI agent in Orlando, Florida, after allegedly charging at the agent with a metal broomstick. He was being questioned by the FBI, Massachusetts State Police, and local law enforcement about his relationship with Tamerlan Tsarnaev. Todashev’s family in a lawsuit says he was simply trying to leave his apartment and law enforcement overreacted.

The defense at Dzhokhar Tsarnaev’s 2015 trial wanted to introduce the recordings to show that he was manipulated by his brother, but a federal judge denied the request.

Neither defense attorneys nor prosecutors immediately responded to requests for comment.

The younger Tsarnaev was sentenced to death for setting off the two bombs at the marathon finish line in April 2013 that killed three spectators. He is currently housed at the federal Supermax prison in Florence, Colorado.

Tamerlan Tsarnaev died during a confrontation with police in Watertown days after the bombings.

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Alarm In Britain Over New Novichok Nerve Agent Poisoning

By Karla Adam And William Booth

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

LONDON — The British government on Thursday called on Russia to explain “exactly what has gone on” after a British couple fell into a coma following exposure to the same type of Soviet-era nerve agent used in March to poison a former spy and his daughter.

The latest health crisis involving the chemical Novichok came about eight miles from the site where former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his adult daughter, Yulia, were stricken four months ago.

The couple was exposed to the nerve agent after “handling a contaminated item,” the Metropolitan Police said in an evening statement.

Investigators are now left trying to determine if this was residual contamination from the March attack — which British authorities linked to the Russian government. Moscow has categorically denied any involvement.

If remnants of the March attack are proven, it could raise wider concerns that health officials failed to eliminate exposure risks after an extensive clean up. But another, more troubling, scenario would be that it was a different batch of Novichok that sickened the British couple on Saturday in the small town of Amesbury.

"It is now time that the Russian state comes forward and explains exactly what has gone on," Sajid Javid, Britain's home secretary, told Parliament.

Witnesses told the British press that the couple — identified as Charlie Rowley, 45, and Dawn Sturgess, 44 — were frothing at the mouth and incoherent before lapsing into coma. They are now in critical condition at Salisbury District hospital, the same hospital where the Skripals were treated.

"It is completely unacceptable for our people to be either deliberate or accidental targets," Javid told Parliament, adding that it was also unacceptable for British streets or parks to be "dumping grounds for poison."

Russia hit back, urging Britain to avoid meddling in politics.

Maria Zakharova, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, told reporters in Moscow that Britain should avoid "dirty political games" and should instead cooperate with Russian law enforcement.

The Russian embassy in London called for a joint investigation into the Salisbury incident.

The latest incident threatens to further sour British-Russia relations, which are already in the deep freeze following the attempted murder of the Skripals.

Britain condemned that attack as a hostile act by Russia and went on to expel 23 Russian diplomats. At least 26 other countries joined in retaliatory measures by also expelling Russian diplomats. British ministers and members of the royal family have also boycotted the World Cup in Russia.

"I know that many of you will question whether this incident is linked to that one," Javid said, referring to the Skripal poisoning. "That is clearly the main line of inquiry. However, we must not jump to conclusions and we must give the police the space and the time to carry out their investigations."

Officials have insisted that the risk to the wider public is low. They say that the current theory is that the British pair came into contact with nerve agent at a location not covered in Skripal decontamination sites.

Health officials have advised as a "highly precautionary measure" those who visited the sites that Rowley and Sturgess went to on Friday and Saturday should wash their clothes and wipe down their personal belongings, like phones and handbags. They also urged locals not to pick up any unknown items.

Britain's security minister, Ben Wallace, told the BBC that the "working assumption" is that the British pair were not directly targeted, and called on the Russian state to help by passing along details of the original attack.

"The Russian state could put this wrong right. They could tell us what happened, what they did and fill in some of the significant gaps that we are trying to pursue . . . They can

come and tell us what happened. I'm waiting for the phone call from the Russian state."

Experts have also wondered if the latest victims may have come into contact with remnants of Novichok from the original attack.

"It's not looking like a new attack," said Hamish De Bretton-Gordon, a former commanding officer of the British Army's chemical and biological weapons unit. Although he is not directly involved with the current investigation, he said that "from what I understand, this is debris or collateral from the original attack, possibly contained in a syringe or medical container."

He said that the assailant could have discarded the residue Novichok four months ago in the park in Salisbury, or indeed in the nearby river, which is currently low at the moment.

"Why the couple then picked it up and became infected, we don't know. Probably just very bad luck," he said.

Anton Troianovski in Moscow contributed to this report.

UK Official Accuses Russia Of Dumping Poison In Britain

By Danica Kirka, Jill Lawless And Gregory Katz

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

AMESBURY, England (AP) — Britain's interior minister accused Russia on Thursday of turning the U.K. into a "dumping grounds for poison," and demanded an explanation on how two people were inadvertently poisoned with the same military-grade nerve agent used to attack a former Russian spy and his daughter in the same area four months ago.

A man and woman in their 40s were in critical condition Thursday at a hospital in southwest England after they fell ill Saturday near Salisbury, a city not far from Britain's iconic Stonehenge monument.

Experts at Britain's Porton Down chemical weapons laboratory have determined that the two were exposed to the same type of Novichok nerve agent that was used to attack ex-spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, on March 4 in Salisbury.

Britain has accused Russia of being behind the Skripal attack but the Kremlin denies any involvement. British Home Secretary Sajid Javid told Parliament on Thursday that it is now time for Russia to explain "exactly what has gone on."

"It is completely unacceptable for our people to be either deliberate or accidental targets, or for our streets, our parks, our towns to be dumping grounds for poison," Javid said.

The unexplained poisoning of two British citizens with no apparent link to Russia raised health concerns in Salisbury, where a massive decontamination effort took place after the Skripal poisoning case.

There was no panic as police cordons sprang up again and police stood guard near potential contamination sites Thursday. Still, residents could not contain their unease with a second brush with Novichok, even though public health officials said the risk of contamination to anyone was very low.

Keith Burton, 56, was among the concerned.

"We had hoped it was all over and done with," he said. "Perhaps they forgot about something? Perhaps it was something dropped somewhere? We simply don't know."

Experts say just a few milligrams of the odorless liquid — the weight of a snowflake — is enough to kill a person within minutes. Finding it is the problem.

British officials say they believe the nerve agent was smeared on Skripal's door, but have not explained how that was done. They had a timeline of the Skripals' movements in Salisbury as they became ill, and spent millions of pounds cleaning those known sites. But they have not explained how they can, or cannot, track the nerve agent through an area.

Chemical weapons expert Hamish de Bretton-Gordon said the latest victims are likely collateral damage from the Skripal attack.

"The Novichok gel that was smeared on the handle of the Skripals' house was presumably transported in some device or syringe," he said. "I think the working assumption now is that device or that syringe is what has appeared and the residue caused these two people to become ill."

The new case has surfaced days before a NATO summit that is expected to address the worsening relations between Russia and the West. It also comes as Russia hosts the World Cup — a monthlong global extravaganza in which both the English and Russian soccer teams have advanced so far.

The Kremlin's spokesman says Russia is concerned about the case but had nothing to do with either poisoning.

"Russia has categorically denied and continues to categorically deny the possibility of any kind of involvement to what was happening there," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, told reporters Thursday.

Peskov noted that Britain rejected Russia's offer of a joint probe of the Skripal case, adding that the U.K. "has not presented any evidence of Russia's involvement in this, besides unfounded accusations."

Britain has said the type of nerve agent used in the Skripal attack was developed by the Soviet Union and could only have been produced by a state agency. British Prime Minister Theresa May gave Russia a deadline to explain how Novichok could have been used in Britain, and when the Kremlin failed to respond the government said it had no option but to believe the Russian state was involved in the attack.

Javid said Thursday the nerve agent involved in the current case was the same variety as that used against

Skripal and his daughter, but it's not clear whether the two samples came from the same batch.

"What we are clear on ... is that this is the exact same nerve agent from the Novichok family," he said. "We cannot attribute this to the same batch at this point. Scientists will be looking into that. I am also told that may not even be possible."

Local police declared the recent poisoning a "major incident" Wednesday, four days after the couple — identified by friends as 44-year-old Dawn Sturgess and 45-year-old Charlie Rowley — were found at a residential building in Amesbury, eight miles (13 kilometers) from Salisbury.

Authorities initially thought the two had taken a contaminated batch of heroin or crack cocaine.

Police cordoned off a home in Amesbury, believed to be Rowley's, and other places the pair visited, including a church, a pharmacy and a park in Salisbury near where the Skripals were found.

The Skripals' illness initially baffled doctors after they were found unconscious on a park bench in Salisbury in March. Scientists at the Porton Down concluded they had been poisoned with Novichok.

Andrea Sella, professor of inorganic chemistry at University College London, said Novichok nerve agents "are designed to be quite persistent — they hang around in the environment, neither evaporating or decomposing quickly.

"That means that if a container or a surface was contaminated with this material, it would remain a danger for a long time. And it will be vital to trace the movements of this couple to identify where they might have come into contact with the source," he said. "So while the public at large are at very low risk from this material, until the source is found there is a remote chance that someone else might come into contact with it."

Ben Wallace, Britain's security minister, said the Russians should come forward and tell British authorities what they know about the Novichok poisonings.

"I'm waiting for the phone call from the Russian state," he said. "The offer is there. They are the ones who could fill in all the clues to keep people safe."

Kirka and Lawless reported from London. Matt Dunham in Amesbury and Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed.

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UK Demands Russia Explain Nerve Attack After Two More People Struck Down

By Alex Fraser

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Theories Abound In New Novichok Poisoning In U.K.

By Richard Pérez-Peña And Ellen Barry

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

LONDON — As the British government scrambled to explain a second nerve-agent poisoning of two people in southwestern England, experts on Thursday were weighing a range of theories about how this could have happened again.

The police said on Wednesday that a couple in Amesbury, England, had been sickened by the same class of nerve agent, Novichok, developed by the Russians and used to poison Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, on March 4 just a few miles away, in Salisbury.

On Thursday, Sajid Javid, the home secretary, went a step further, saying in the House of Commons that government scientists had determined that it was not only “from the Novichok family of nerve agents, but the same type of nerve agent from that family.” But he could not say whether it was from the same laboratory or batch that had produced the poison used in the March attack.

[Read more about how the Novichok cases unfolded.]

The government blamed Russia for the initial attack, an accusation the Kremlin has denied. The case heightened diplomatic tensions between Russia and the West, leading Britain and its allies to expel more than 150 diplomats, and prompting Moscow to retaliate.

“Many of you will question whether this incident is linked to that one,” Mr. Javid said. “That is clearly the main line of inquiry. However, we must not jump to conclusions.”

In an interview on BBC radio, Ben Wallace, the British minister of state for security, said, “The working assumption would be these are victims of the consequences of the previous attack.”

The poisoning of Dawn Sturgess, 44, and her boyfriend, Charlie Rowley, 45, in Amesbury is probably an accidental result of the attack on the Skripals, experts say. Some added that it could be a separate assault, though it was unclear why the couple would have been targeted.

Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess were being treated at the same hospital that had cared for the Skripals, who survived the attack after weeks in a coma.

Analysts and other experts put forward multiple theories about how the recent poisoning could have occurred.

The nerve agent could have been left on, or in, a discarded object by whoever poisoned the Skripals. It could have been accidentally spread by someone else who had come into contact with it. Or the person who planted it on Mr.

Skripal’s front door may have intentionally left it at another location, just to muddy the waters.

“I would put it in the 90 percent-plus likelihood that this was in a discarded item,” like a coat with a container of the nerve agent in a pocket, said Richard Guthrie, the coordinating editor of CBW Events, a website on chemical and biological weapons.

Andrew C. Weber, a former United States assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical and biological defense programs, said, “It is quite possible that the couple touched a container, applicator or protective gear that was used in the original Russian Novichok attack.”

That hypothesis is plausible, but so are others, said Dan Kaszeta, a former chemical and biological weapons adviser to the White House and the Secret Service. “There’s too many variables here,” he said.

Mr. Rowley, who has his own apartment in Amesbury, is a “skip diver,” according to people who knew him, going into big trash-hauling bins to find usable items.

“I think they touched something whilst rummaging and were contaminated like that,” said Kyesha Guest, a friend of the couple. She guessed that “Charlie had been skip diving and touched it, and then touched Dawn.”

Ms. Sturgess, who lives in John Baker House, a home in Salisbury for people at risk of homelessness, is a popular member of the community, a mother figure to others in the house, residents said.

“She’s lovely,” said Peter Cook, a retired trucker.

The Amesbury apartment and John Baker House are among six sites that the police have cordoned off, saying that the couple may have been contaminated when they were there shortly before taking ill on Saturday. Officials said the latest victims had not recently gone to any of the same locations the Skripals visited around the time they were poisoned.

Residents of John Baker House said they were told Thursday morning that they had to leave the building — immediately and permanently — and that other accommodations would be found for them. The street was blocked off by the police, and residents said that officers appeared to be searching Ms. Sturgess’s room.

Russia categorically denies any involvement in the poisoning of the couple or in the Skripals, said Dmitry S. Peskov, a spokesman for President Vladimir V. Putin. “We are, of course, concerned after all by the repeated use of such substances in Europe,” he said in a conference call with reporters. “Although, on the other hand, we do not have information about what kinds of substances were used, how they were used.”

Russian officials also offered alternative theories, including one that says the British could have planted the nerve agent. Sergei Zheleznyak, deputy speaker of Parliament, suggested that the British authorities had

concocted the case to sully Russia's image while the country was hosting the World Cup.

"A huge number of British fans, despite the warnings from their government, came to support their team," Mr. Zheleznyak told state television. "Their impressions are just destroying everything British propaganda built over the past few years. To break up this flow of really positive emotions that the British fans are sharing, they had to put something like this in the mass media."

Nikolai Kovalyov, a former director of the Federal Security Service, the successor to the K.G.B., suggested a rogue scientist from the Porton Down laboratory, near Salisbury, was conducting experiments on people living nearby.

But Mr. Javid said, "We can anticipate further disinformation from the Kremlin, as we saw following the Salisbury attack."

On social media, critics of the British government questioned how the nerve agent could have survived four months without breaking down into less-harmful components, as many other toxins would. But experts had an explanation.

"The stuff is relatively persistent — it's designed to last a long time," Mr. Kaszeta said.

That would be especially true if the toxin were suspended in a gel, he said, adding that it was a strong theory among investigators looking into the March attack. A thinner liquid would be more easily broken down if it came into contact with water, but a gel would repel water.

Mr. Weber agreed that Novichok had been engineered to resist decay, adding, "I believe it was mixed with some type of gel to help it adhere and persist."

The police have made clear in the Skripal case that "this stuff is very persistent in the environment," Mr. Guthrie said. In addition, he said, a container — such as a syringe wrapped in a plastic bag or a screw-top plastic jar — would have protected the agent from water and decay.

Speaking in Parliament, Mr. Javid said he had been advised that the time needed for this particular agent to deteriorate "can be months and months."

As for how much of the substance the Skripals' assailant had, "that's anybody's guess," Mr. Kaszeta said. "Were the guys who did this given more than they needed?" he asked. "The container might even have fingerprints on it. It's a smoking gun, but killers sometimes even leave a smoking gun at the scene of a crime."

Novichok can be absorbed through the skin, experts say, but it could take hours for the victim to become ill. Police and health officials have asked those who went recently to one of the cordoned-off sites to wash their clothes, and to use disinfectant or wet wipes to clean personal items like cellphones or jewelry.

Sally Davies, the chief medical officer of England, said anyone in the area should refrain from picking up unknown objects from the ground.

Andrew E. Kramer contributed reporting from Moscow.

Amesbury Poisoning: Couple 'Handled Contaminated Item'

[BBC News Online \(UK\)](#), July 5, 2018

The couple poisoned by Novichok were exposed to the substance after handling a contaminated item, police say.

Charlie Rowley, 45, and Dawn Sturgess, 44, collapsed at a flat in Amesbury, Wiltshire, on Saturday and remain critically ill.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said the nerve agent was the same as that used on ex-Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter in March.

Russia said Theresa May's government was subjecting them "to hell".

Mr Javid accused Russia of using Britain as a "dumping ground for poison" after the second incident involving the nerve agent.

But a Russian Embassy spokesman said all allegations of the country's involvement were "merely speculative".

The Met said there were around 100 detectives from the Counter Terrorism Network working alongside Wiltshire Police on the "major incident".

Salisbury District Hospital's chief executive Cara Charles-Barks said the couple are "extremely unwell" and remain in a critical condition.

BBC security correspondent Gordon Corera said that because the highest concentration of Novichok was found on the couple's hands, police believe the item they handled could be a container or receptacle that was used to carry the nerve agent.

He said the most likely hypothesis was the Novichok was left over from an item discarded after the attack on the Skripals.

Toxicologist Prof Alastair Hay said it would be possible for Novichok to still be dangerous four months after first use.

Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu said there was nothing in the couple's background to suggest the pair had been targeted.

The BBC's home affairs correspondent June Kelly said it has been suggested the item "could be a vial or syringe because of the couple's lifestyle".

Chemical weapons expert Richard Guthrie said it was possible that the couple came across the Novichok after it had been disposed of "in a haphazard way".

Debbie Stark, south west deputy director from Public Health England said the risk to the public of further poisoning incidents "remains low".

Police have set up a helpline for anyone who needs further advice: 0800 092 0410 or 0207 158 0124.

In a statement to MPs, Mr Javid said: "It is now time that the Russian state comes forward and explains exactly what has gone on."

He said the "strong working assumption" was that the couple came into contact with Novichok in a location which had not been cleaned up following the Skripal poisoning in nearby Salisbury.

"It is completely unacceptable for our people to be either deliberate or accidental targets, or for our streets, our parks, our towns, to be dumping grounds for poison," he added.

He said he could not rule out the possibility that the Novichok found in Amesbury was from the same batch used in the Salisbury attack and that scientists would be "looking into that". 'Muddy the waters'

Earlier, Mrs May said it was "deeply disturbing" to see two more people exposed to Novichok in the UK, and the police would leave "no stone unturned in their investigation".

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott said British streets must not be allowed to become "killing fields for state actors".

But the spokesman for the Russian Embassy said the government had yet to contact them about the incident

He added: "Instead of genuine co-operation, London is doing everything possible to muddy the waters, to confuse and frighten its own citizens.

"One can only guess what the reasons behind such a line of behaviour are."

Ms Sturgess' father Stephen, 65, told The Times the family found out from TV news that she may have been poisoned by a nerve agent.

"We heard from the hospital on Sunday, and we gave them Dawn's GP details but we didn't hear anything from the police.

"We know as much as the next person in the street. We actually called the police station for information."

Charlie Rowley's older brother Matthew said security measures meant he couldn't get through to the hospital despite ringing several times.

"He's my younger brother, I love him to bits," he said.

"I don't want anything to happen to him, and yet it has. It's heartbreaking."

Natalie Smyth from Amesbury said: "I'm furious that it took four days for them [the police] to even mention it could have been Novichok.

"Were they lying to us about it being drug related?"

Although the risk to the public remains low, Public Health England (PHE) have advised those who were in the areas from 22:00 BST on Friday and which are now cordoned off to wash their clothes and wipe down personal items.

Clothing that cannot be washed should be double-bagged and owners should await "further instructions".

Debbie Stark from PHE said areas of Salisbury that have already been cleaned as part of the Skripal incident – such as the Maltings shopping centre – are safe.

Residents at John Baker House, the supported housing where Ms Sturgess is believed to have been staying, have been evacuated and told they will have to be rehoused.

The police warned members of the public against picking up unfamiliar items.

Sites in Amesbury and Salisbury believed to have been visited by the couple before they fell ill have been cordoned off as a precaution, including a church, park and chemist. On the scene: How Salisbury has reacted

The revelation that two more people have been exposed to the nerve agent Novichok has shocked people in Salisbury.

Residents have experienced months of disruption and anxiety since the poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in March.

Now many are wondering whether, despite a clean-up operation, their city is safe?

There have been accusations from Russia that the UK is persecuting the country and failing to co-operate.

The Skripal case is still shrouded in darkness, says Russia spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, as she called on Theresa May's government to stop the "dirty" games.

She said Russia has sent "dozens of offers of co-operation" and she was confident London would have to apologise to her country.

English City, Stunned, Tries To Make Sense Of New Poisonings

By Ellen Barry And Richard Pérez-Peña

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

SALISBURY, England — Charlie Rowley may have been down on his luck, in and out of treatment for drug addiction, but he had a certain prowess as a "skip diver," sorting through trash for the valuables that his better-off neighbors threw out. He would emerge with chandeliers, toasters, laptops and trinkets for Dawn Sturgess, his girlfriend.

"It's like treasure hunting — you'd find jewelry, you'd find rings," said Josh Harris, 28, a skip diver himself. "It was Charlie's thing."

And it was skip diving — what Americans would call dumpster diving — that Mr. Harris was thinking about on Thursday morning, after Mr. Rowley, 45, and Ms. Sturgess, 44, had become the fourth and fifth victims in a string of poisonings with Novichok, a military-grade nerve agent developed in the last years of the Soviet Union.

As five new sites in Salisbury were sealed off by safety personnel, this stunned city was swept into a bizarre guessing game: How in the world could Ms. Sturgess and Mr. Rowley, a couple known, as one neighbor put it, as part of the "sitting-on-the-bench-drinking community," have come in contact with Novichok, a top-secret weapon known to have been used only once?

The mystery has captured the attention of much of the country. In the days after March 4, when Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, and his daughter were poisoned, British officials declared confidently that Russia was at fault, but tight-lipped investigators have shared little of the evidence they have gathered. The poisoning of two more people, apparently by accident, may provide a new data point about how the assassin worked.

A fuller picture emerged on Thursday of the two victims, who are in critical condition. Ms. Sturgess lived at the John Baker House, a supported-living center that houses people struggling with addiction. Peter Cook, 58, described her as "Dawnie," a motherly figure who drank several bottles of wine a day, but typically stayed away from hard drugs. Mr. Rowley, according to The Salisbury Journal, was jailed for possession of heroin in 2015.

Mr. Harris, a mechanic who also lives in the John Baker House, has watched for days as the police pored through Ms. Sturgess's possessions. A trash bin had been sealed off. So had Mr. Rowley's apartment. So had a beloved riverside park, known here as "Lizzy Gardens."

"They're looking for something, I don't know what," Mr. Harris said.

One of the other residents, Kyesha Guest, 29, thought the same thing. "If Charlie had been skip diving, and touched it, rummaging through the rubbish, and then touched Dawn, maybe that's what happened," she ventured. "I don't think they would have picked up something if they didn't know what it was."

The unexpected poisonings have revived tension between Britain and Russia, which the British have blamed for the attack. Russia on Thursday denied any involvement in the poisoning of the couple, as it did in the case of the Skripals, and suggested alternative theories, including one that says the British could have planted the nerve agent. Sergei Zheleznyak, deputy speaker of the lower house of Parliament, said that the British authorities might have concocted the case to sully Russia's image while the country was hosting the World Cup soccer tournament.

"A huge number of British fans, despite the warnings from their government, came to support their team," Mr. Zheleznyak told state television. "Their impressions are just destroying everything British propaganda built over the past few years. To break up this flow of really positive emotions that the British fans are sharing, they had to put something like this in the mass media."

Investigators have been scrutinizing the actions of Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess during the hours before they collapsed. Ms. Sturgess became sick first, at around 10:15 a.m. on Saturday, going into convulsions in the bathroom and foaming at the mouth. Nearly five hours passed before Mr. Rowley, went into a zombielike state, his pupils shrunk to pinpoints, rocking back and forth and sweating profusely, a witness said.

Chemical weapons experts tried to piece the events together.

"The latest victims, did they come into contact with objects the would-be killer left behind?" asked Andrew C. Weber, a former United States assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical and biological defense programs. "I think that's the most plausible."

Richard Guthrie, the coordinating editor of CBW Events, a website on chemical and biological weapons, said he would "put it in the 90-percent-plus likelihood that this was a discarded item," like a coat with a container of the nerve agent in the pocket.

"You would want to dispose of the coat, of the gloves," he said. "If it was good tradecraft, that would have been disposed of in a place that people wouldn't think of it being disposed." The couple might well have picked it up, spotting "a nice-looking jacket bundled up."

Dan Kaszeta, a former chemical and biological weapons adviser to the White House and the Secret Service, considered the possibility that the couple had found a container, like an ampul or a syringe, that had been used to transport the nerve agent to Salisbury.

"Were the guys who did this given more than they needed?" Mr. Kaszeta said. If so, "depending on how clean or sloppy they were," the object might be a crucial piece of evidence.

"God knows, the container may even have fingerprints on it, it's a smoking gun," he said. "But killers sometimes leave a smoking gun at the scene of a crime."

Becca Stewart, 20, who lives in a modest apartment beside Mr. Rowley's, said she had been instructed "not to go anywhere near the front door" of his apartment, but had been told little about the risk to her or her unborn baby, due in November. Transport vans could be seen coming and going, possibly carrying evidence from inside the house, and work crews erected high corrugated-steel barricades around the apartment.

"Now it's on my doorstep," Ms. Stewart said of the nerve agent, which she has been hurriedly researching on the internet. "They could have touched anything, like the door handle."

Another area cordoned off was Queen Elizabeth Gardens, a lush park along the Avon riverbank that is, on most summer evenings, crowded with children and adults. Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess had apparently spent time in

the park before returning to his home and falling ill. James Weekes, 78, stood in the parking lot, gazing at the playground where his grandchildren usually play.

"I'm nearly 80 years old, I've had a life, but I'd be more worried about the kids," said Mr. Weekes, a retired printer. "Until they find out what the level of Novichok is, how far it's going to spread, I wouldn't want my kids coming out here."

He surveyed the sprawling park, puzzling over the question of whether a trained assassin would dispose of evidence there.

"I can't understand why that person would aimlessly throw an ampul in the grass," he said "I imagine they'd use professionals. I'm sure they wouldn't use a dimbo. Would they?"

Ellen Barry reported from Salisbury, and Richard Pérez-Peña from London.

UK Town Faces New Reality: Another Nerve Agent Poisoning

By Gregory Katz, Danica Kirka, And Jill Lawless
[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

AMESBURY, England (AP) — In this normally pleasant town of 10,000 residents a stone's throw from the mysterious Stonehenge monument, the new reality is sinking in: Novichok, again.

Four months had passed since the nerve agent attack on a former Russian spy and his daughter, and the collective nightmare seemed to be fading. No longer were forensics experts in oversize hazmat suits combing the area for an invisible killer developed by the Soviet Union in Cold War times.

Eager tourists, drawn by an unusually long spell of glorious summer weather, were back at Stonehenge, and England's World Cup team was surging, buoying spirits. Then a local couple with no obvious connection to Russia or to espionage fell desperately ill and the government said Novichok was to blame.

Some are embracing the "keep calm and carry on" ethos that helped England through two world wars, but others were frightened by the seemingly random poisoning of two innocents who now lie critically ill in a local hospital.

"It's shocking, and it's scary," said Elaine Read, a worker at The Kings Arms pub who used to occasionally share a pint with Dawn Sturgess, one of the victims. "Nobody expected it to happen again. Everyone was saying it was Russia, but now it's just two ... local people. They're just like us."

She said it's difficult to feel safe after what happened to Sturgess, 44, and 45-year-old Charlie Rowley. Both became violently ill within hours of each other on Saturday. At first, authorities believed they had taken some bad heroin or crack cocaine, but it turned out to be Novichok.

"You don't know where it is, that's the trouble," Read said of the elusive nerve agent. "You don't know how Dawn and Charlie got it, how it crossed their paths."

The bizarre case, combining elements of a murder mystery and a spy thriller, is stoking international tensions ahead of next week's NATO summit, which will deal in part with worsening relations between Russia and the West.

Britain's interior minister demanded Thursday that Russia explain how two people were inadvertently poisoned with the same military-grade nerve agent used to attack ex-Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, in the nearby town of Salisbury in March.

Britain has accused Russia of being behind the attack on the Skripals, which the Kremlin vehemently denies. British Home Secretary Sajid Javid told Parliament on Thursday that it is now time for Russia to explain "exactly what has gone on."

"It is completely unacceptable for our people to be either deliberate or accidental targets, or for our streets, our parks, our towns to be dumping grounds for poison," Javid said.

In Amesbury, residents were advised to wash their clothes and take other precautions if they were at the locations believed to have been frequented by the latest victims.

Some were staying inside to avoid any risk of contamination, but most were going about their business. A few parts of town remained cordoned off by police, including the Baptist Church, but activity in the easygoing town center continued unabated.

"I'm not so easily scared, but there has to be more to it," said Justin Pritchard, enjoying a beer with a friend.

"We don't know what's going on. First, they said it was the Russians. Now this is completely separate. Originally, we all thought it was the Russians, now it doesn't seem quite right," he said, noting that Sturgess and Rowley have no connection to Russia.

British officials said Thursday they believe the latest victims were not deliberately targeted but came into contact with the Novichok used in the Skripal poisoning. Police said the couple was exposed to the nerve agent after handling a contaminated item, but provided no details.

That isn't convincing to Rick Bird, 65, a retired British army veteran who was trained in the handling of nerve agents during his military career. He said he never dreamed nerve agents would be deployed in Britain.

"The latest case seems to be an odd one," Bird said. "The first one in Salisbury, we thought we were all over it. This came totally out of the blue. It's the fear factor, for everybody."

The last few days have been traumatic for some residents, particularly those who live close to areas that were shut down to the public because of possible contamination.

Alex Brittany, 29, said he woke up to find the Baptist Church near his home being cordoned off. The experience left him shaky.

"It is quite frightening," he said. "What scared me this time was that the cordons were near where I live. You expect big attacks in London, Manchester. But Amesbury? Salisbury? Wow. Really?"

Experts say just a few milligrams of the odorless Novichok liquid — the weight of a snowflake — is enough to kill a person within minutes. And finding it is the problem.

Chemical weapons expert Hamish de Bretton-Gordon said the latest victims were likely collateral damage from the Skripal attack.

"The Novichok gel that was smeared on the handle of the Skripals' house was presumably transported in some device or syringe," he said. "I think the working assumption now is that device or that syringe is what has appeared, and the residue caused these two people to become ill."

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said Russia is concerned about the case but had nothing to do with either poisoning.

"Russia has categorically denied and continues to categorically deny the possibility of any kind of involvement with what was happening there," Peskov told reporters Thursday.

Andrea Sella, professor of inorganic chemistry at University College London, said Novichok nerve agents "are designed to be quite persistent — they hang around in the environment, neither evaporating nor decomposing quickly.

"That means that if a container or a surface was contaminated with this material, it would remain a danger for a long time. And it will be vital to trace the movements of this couple to identify where they might have come into contact with the source," he said.

"So, while the public at large are at very low risk from this material, until the source is found there is a remote chance that someone else might come into contact with it," Sella said.

Kirka and Lawless reported from London. Associated Press writers Matt Dunham in Amesbury, England, and Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed to this report.

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Ex-spy Sergei Skripal And Daughter Were 'Under Russian Surveillance' Months Before Salisbury Poisoning

By Samuel Osborne

[Independent \(UK\)](#), July 5, 2018

A former Russian spy and his daughter were reportedly under surveillance by the Russian authorities months before they were poisoned in Salisbury.

Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, were exposed to the novichok nerve agent in March.

Britain accused Russia of poisoning the Skripals in the first known offensive use of such a chemical weapon on European soil since the Second World War.

Russia has denied any involvement in the poisoning.

Both the former spy and his daughter were under surveillance by the Russian authorities for some time before the attack, BBC Newsnight reports.

The broadcaster said Ms Skripal's phone has been investigated for signs of malware which could have enabled it to be used to track her movements.

The British government previously said Russia had been spying on the Skripals for at least five years.

In a letter to Nato, the national security adviser, Sir Mark Sedwill, said the pair were the subject of "interest" from the Kremlin's security services since 2013.

He said Ms Skripal's email accounts had been targeted by Russia's GRU intelligence agency, where her father served as a colonel while passing secrets to Britain as a double agent.

Mr Skripal may still have been seen as a target even after he was convicted of espionage and handed over to Britain in a high-profile spy swap, Mr Sedwill added.

Yulia Skripal's email account was targeted by Russia's intelligence agency, the British government said (PA)

It comes as counter-terrorism police said a couple left in a critical condition in Wiltshire were exposed to the same nerve agent.

Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley were taken ill on Saturday in Amesbury, around eight miles away from where the Skripals were attacked with novichok in Salisbury.

Speaking to reporters from New Scotland Yard, the Metropolitan Police assistant commissioner, Neil Basu, said police were investigating links between the two poisonings.

"I appreciate that there will be a great deal of speculation as to whether this incident is linked to the events in Salisbury in March," he said.

"I would add that the complex investigation into the attempted murders of Yulia and Sergei remains ongoing and detectives continue to sift through and assess all the available evidence and are following every possible lead to identify those responsible, for what remains a reckless and barbaric criminal act.

"I must say that we are not in a position to say whether the nerve agent was from the same batch that the Skripals were exposed to. The possibility that these two investigations might be linked is clearly a line of enquiry for us." Military personnel investigating the poisoning of

Professor Dame Sally Davies, chief medical officer for England, said the Skripal episode meant officials had a “well-established response” in place.

She said: “I understand that those in Salisbury and in surrounding areas will be concerned at this news, particularly those who recently visited areas now cordoned off by police.”

She said the risk to the public remains low, but issued “highly precautionary” advice to those with concerns. Personnel in hazmat suits investigate the poisoning of

Around 100 counter-terrorism officers are working on the case and police have cordoned off at least five different areas, including a park and a property in Salisbury, as well as a pharmacy and a Baptist church community centre in Amesbury.

Mr Basu said: “This is a precautionary measure while we continue to investigate how they came into contact with the substance.”

The attack on the Skripals prompted the biggest Western expulsion of Russian diplomats since the Cold War, as British allies in Europe and the United States sided with the view of the prime minister, Theresa May, that Moscow was either responsible or had lost control of the nerve agent.

Mystery surrounds the attack and the motive behind it remains unclear, as is the logic of using such an exotic nerve agent, which has overt links to the Soviet military during the Cold War.

NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS

With Deadline Approaching, DMV Promotes ‘Real ID’ Licenses

By Eric Anderson

[Albany \(NY\) Times Union](#), July 5, 2018

2020 is closer than you think. That’s the message the state Department of Motor Vehicles is promoting as it seeks to get New Yorkers to get a “Real ID” license.

Starting Oct. 1, 2020, domestic air travelers will need some form of Real ID to clear airport checkpoints. Such identification includes a valid passport, a Global Entry or other Trusted Traveler program identification card, a border crossing card, or a state-issued Real ID or Enhanced driver’s license.

Both the enhanced and Real ID license require a visit to your DMV office with supporting forms of identification. While the Enhanced license also allows you to cross the Canadian and Mexican borders without a passport, it costs an extra \$30. The Real ID license has no extra cost, and like the Enhanced license will also be accepted for entry to federal office buildings and other installations.

“Real ID is available at all DMV offices statewide and we encourage you to get your new license or non-driver ID

today, especially if you are renewing or applying for the first time,” said Terri Egan, DMV executive deputy commissioner.

The Real ID requirements grew out of recommendations by the 9/11 Commission. The standards make it more difficult to forge or tamper with, said Bart Johnson, the federal security director at Albany International Airport. Johnson joined Egan and Albany International Airport CEO John O’Donnell at a press conference Thursday morning at the terminal.

DMV representatives, meanwhile, were at a table just beyond the Transportation Security Administration checkpoint, offering information to travelers. Egan said the table would be staffed several times a week, typically in the morning, the busiest period at the airport.

DMV also plans information campaigns at the New York State Fair, the NASCAR races at Watkins Glen, and at other locations throughout the state.

US Urges ‘Decisive’ Steps By Pakistan For Afghan Peace

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

The United States is calling for “sustained and decisive steps” by Pakistan to bring Taliban leaders to the negotiating table with the Afghan government.

The militant group has resumed attacks after respecting a brief cease-fire last month.

The top diplomat for South Asia, Alice Wells, has just returned from talks with leaders in both countries. She met Pakistan’s powerful army chief Tuesday. She welcomed positive steps by Pakistan and Afghanistan to improve ties, but said Pakistan needs to take political initiatives to help drive an Afghan peace process.

She urged Pakistan to expel Taliban leaders and press them to negotiate with Kabul.

Wells spoke to reporters in Washington Thursday.

The Trump administration suspended security assistance to Pakistan in January over its failure to crackdown on Afghan Taliban on its soil.

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Trump Plans To Raise Russian Election-Meddling With Putin

U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin are set to meet July 16 in Helsinki, Finland, for their first formal bilateral meeting

By Rebecca Ballhaus

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Trump To Press Putin On Election Meddling, Ukraine Aggression

By S.A. Miller

[Washington Times](#), July 5, 2018

U.S. President Trump plans to confront Russian President Vladimir Putin on Moscow's "malign activity" around the globe, including election meddling, when they meet next week, top administration officials said Thursday.

Jon Huntsman, U.S. ambassador to Russia, said Mr. Trump wants to improve relations but isn't letting Mr. Putin off the hook for aggression in Ukraine and interfering in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

"The ball is really in Russia's court, and the president will continue to hold Russia responsible for its malign activity," Mr. Huntsman told reporters.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin will meet July 16 in Helsinki, Finland. It will be the first formal summit between the two leaders, although they've met twice before.

Mr. Huntsman said the U.S. has repeatedly confronted Russia about the election hacking, despite Mr. Trump frequently diminishing the issue.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin will meet alone at the summit because the president decided that this is the right time for direct communication, said a senior administration official.

The summit also will include a bilateral meeting and a working lunch between Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin.

The summit will follow a NATO meeting where confronting Russia will also top the agenda, said U.S. Ambassador to NATO Kay Bailey Hutchison.

She said a major issue at the NATO meeting in Brussels will be strengthening the alliance's deterrent to "malign activity by Russia."

Mrs. Hutchison and Mr. Huntsman briefed reporters on the president's upcoming trip to Europe, which will also include a visit to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Huntsman said Mr. Trump believes an improved relationship with Russia is in both countries' interest and in the interest of world peace.

"You can't solve problems if you are not talking about them," he said.

Putin Prepares A Real Deal Trump Can Tout After Summit

By Henry Meyer

[Bloomberg News](#), July 5, 2018

Kremlin officials are in intense negotiations with their counterparts in Washington to strike at least one deal they hope will let President Donald Trump tout his summit with Vladimir Putin as a triumph that justifies steps to repair relations.

At the top of the list for the July 16 meeting in Helsinki, Finland, is Iran's role in Syria, an issue that Moscow is

simultaneously negotiating with Tehran, a senior Russian official said on condition of anonymity because he's not authorized to comment on the record.

Putin has agreed in principle to U.S. and Israeli demands that Iranian-backed forces in southern Syria be kept away from Israel's border, replaced with troops loyal to the government in Damascus, two Kremlin advisers said.

After studying Trump's meeting with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, during which he announced a surprise halt to U.S. military exercises with South Korea, Putin decided he needs to negotiate with the billionaire personally, the senior official said, without elaborating. The two leaders may meet without aides, as Trump and Kim did in Singapore, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

U.S. Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman confirmed plans for a one-on-one meeting during a conference call on Thursday, saying Trump will go into the encounter with his "eyes wide open" about Putin's intentions.

Trump has shifted away from his predecessor's policy of demanding the ouster of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad, a position formulated before Russia turned the tide of the country's civil war in Assad's favor with Iran's help. U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton, who met with Russia's recently re-elected president to lay the groundwork for the summit, told CBS News on Sunday that Assad is no longer "the strategic issue" in Syria – Iran is.

"We'll see what happens when the two of them get together," said Bolton, who's long advocated regime change in the Islamic Republic. "There are possibilities for doing a larger negotiation on helping to get Iranian forces out of Syria and back into Iran, which would be a significant step forward."

The first extended meeting between the two leaders is being viewed in Russia as an opportunity to turn a new page in relations that have plunged to rock bottom over a host of issues. They include the war in Syria and the sanctions imposed on Russia for its alleged election meddling, its annexation of Crimea and support for secessionists in Ukraine.

Still, there are major questions about Putin's ability to enforce any agreement involving Iran's actions in Syria, even if he offers to deploy troops to stabilize the border areas in question. This in turn is fueling concerns in Washington and among U.S. allies in Europe that Trump may proclaim the Helsinki meeting a breakthrough without extracting any real concessions.

Trump trumpeted Kim's vague pledge to "denuclearize" as a major victory for world peace, yet reports by researchers and media organizations have since detailed North Korean efforts to boost nuclear fuel production, build more missile launchers and expand a key rocket-engine plant. Mideast Arbiter

Russia may have supplanted America as the indispensable arbiter in various Mideast conflicts but there's

only so far Putin is willing to go to appease Trump when it comes to Iran, according to Andrei Kortunov, head of the Russian International Affairs Council, a research group set up by the Kremlin.

"Trump can't force Putin to turn away from Iran," Kortunov said. "Putin is not willing to push Iran too hard and he cannot rely on Trump."

Russia and Saudi Arabia have already irked Iran and pleased Trump by agreeing to roll back some of the cuts oil producers introduced to boost flagging prices. At the same time, Russia is also working to salvage the Iranian nuclear accord that Trump abandoned and mitigate the sanctions he's reimposed. The foreign ministers of Russia, China, France, Germany and Britain will discuss the issue with Iranian officials Friday in Vienna.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday that he'll confer with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo after the Helsinki summit about implementing whatever agreements are reached. Even so, he cautioned that "it's absolutely not realistic" to demand Iran pull out of Syria altogether.

"As in any other part of the world, you have to start by sitting down at the negotiating table, lay out your concerns and talk about how to resolve them on a mutually acceptable basis," Lavrov told reporters in Moscow. Pressure Point

After seven years of grinding conflict, Iran and proxy forces including Hezbollah have built up a formidable presence along Syria's borders with Israel and Lebanon. That's drawn repeated missile strikes from Israel and threats of further action, which Russia is using to pressure Iran, according to Dmitri Trenin, head of the Carnegie Moscow Center.

While Russia and Iran have been on the same side, backing Assad against rebels armed by the U.S. and its allies, their interests are now diverging as Putin seeks to secure his gains with regional backing, said Trenin, author of the 2017 book: "What Is Russia Up To in the Middle East?"

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is scheduled to meet with Putin in Moscow next week for the second time in as many months.

Putin's shifting positions on Syria and oil have angered officials in Tehran, according to Ali Khorram, a former Iranian ambassador to the United Nations.

"Russia has not only stabbed Iran in the back when it comes to Syria, but also voluntarily announced its readiness with Saudi Arabia to push Iran's quota out of OPEC," Khorram wrote in the Arman daily newspaper.

Putin's strategy is to try and find a middle ground between the conflicting interests of major players. In particular, he may give Israel a green light to bomb any Iranian convoy that tries to deliver advanced weaponry to Hezbollah while also allowing Iran to maintain shipments of

conventional arms to its Lebanese proxy forces, according to Kortunov, the Kremlin adviser.

For Iran, the overriding goal is to maintain its influence inside Syria and keep supply lines open, said Ehud Yaari, an Israel-based fellow at the Washington Institute.

"Russia has an interest to bleed Iran in Syria, to weaken Iran but not collapse Iran because it may lose the Assad regime, which is its major card," said Sami Nader, head of the Levant Institute for Strategic Studies in Beirut. "They want Iran in check and under control."

White House Says Trump To Meet Putin One-on-one

'Of greatest concern is that the President seems to believe that Putin is susceptible to some sort of charm offensive,' says a former Obama national security adviser.

By Annie Karni

[Politico](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump will initially meet one-on-one with Russian President Vladimir Putin later this month, senior administration officials said Thursday, a risky approach to dealing with the experienced Russian leader driven by Trump himself.

"The president has determined that now is the time for direct communication," a senior administration official told reporters on a conference call when asked why Trump is not including top foreign policy advisers in the discussion.

That tete-a-tete in Helsinki will be followed by an extended bilateral meeting and then a working lunch, both of which will be attended by senior U.S. and Russian officials, U.S. Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman said on the call.

The day of conversations with Putin is expected to focus on several issues, including arms control, Ukraine, Syria and Russian election meddling, the official said. It will be the first dedicated meeting between the two presidents, who have spoken by phone and on the sidelines of two gatherings of world leaders last year.

But the official downplayed the prospect of concrete agreements, stressing that the summit's main achievement will be its very existence. "We haven't had across-the-table conversations about things like election meddling and malign activity that really do need to take place," the senior administration official said. "You can't solve problems if you're not willing to talk about them."

The official added: "The fact that we're having a summit at this level is a deliverable in itself. I don't exclude there will be some concrete agreement coming out on the other end of the summit. There are a lot of issues to be discussed."

Putin, in contrast, is expected to arrive in Finland with a much clearer set of objectives: further dividing the U.S. from Europe, for instance, escaping sanctions imposed over his

ongoing aggression in Ukraine, and gaining a freer hand to operate in Syria.

That imbalance of objectives and preparation is making foreign policy experts anxious about the meeting.

So does the wide gap in diplomatic experience between Trump and Putin.

In North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un, Trump confronted a young leader eager to impress on the world stage, a man who looked tickled by the attention and camera flashes that greeted him in Singapore last month.

Putin has negotiated directly with four American presidents over nearly 20 years.

"This is not a summit that should happen at this time," warned Tom Donilon, a former national security adviser to President Barack Obama. "Putin has almost defiantly done nothing to earn such a meeting. And none of the requisites are in place. You want a clear set of goals and to have consulted closely with allies on those goals, you want to have allied unity going into such a meeting, and you want to have a solid understanding of who you are dealing with and a real understanding of the history of the relationship."

"Putin will have mastered his brief on every issue and under no circumstances should President Trump be advised to do the meeting in a truly one-on-one setting," Donilon added.

For a president who prides himself on relying on personal charm instead of briefing books, it's a high risk gambit to take on a former KGB officer skilled in manipulation.

Experts say the risk is heightened by the fact that Trump will be coming from a gathering of Western leaders at the NATO Summit in Brussels a few days earlier. Daniel Fried, a former senior diplomat and harsh Putin critic, said that if Trump clashes with NATO allies much as he did with leaders at last month's G-7 summit in Canada, the president will arrive in Finland even more susceptible to Putin's will.

"The worst-case scenario is that Putin charms him, and he starts trashing the Western alliance, trashing American values," Fried said. "I don't think that's likely, but it's in the range of possible outcomes. I say that without pride or pleasure."

Fried, who has studied U.S.-Russia summits, wrote recently that "personal chemistry between leaders can help at the margins, but will not compensate for incompatible strategic interests; assuming otherwise may lead to major problems."

"Of greatest concern is that the president seems to believe that Putin is susceptible to some sort of charm offensive," Donilon said. "That is not correct. Putin is an intelligence officer with nearly 20 years of experience in leading Russia. It is all about hard, cold national interests."

Another question mark before the Putin meeting is how Trump might address Russia's 2016 election meddling, which

continues to be a subject of special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation.

Trump has repeatedly cast doubt on whether Russia did interfere, despite the unanimous consensus of U.S. intelligence agencies to that effect. But the president did confront Putin on the subject during a meeting with the Russian at the G-20 summit in Hamburg last July. Trump said afterward that he had "strongly pressed" Putin on the subject, received firm denials, and concluded it was "time to move forward."

In the Monday conference call, the Trump official called Russia's election meddling a "malign activity" but would not predict whether Trump will echo that hard-line language.

"He knows the facts and details," the official said. "We all talk about it a little different, the president will talk about it in his own way."

Trump Will Focus On Russia's 'Malign' Activity At Summits: US Officials

By Jeff Mason

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

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Trump And Putin Will Meet One-on-One In Finland, Officials Say

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump will speak one-on-one with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia this month when they meet in Helsinki, Finland, the administration confirmed Thursday, injecting an element of unpredictability and mystery into an encounter that White House advisers describe as a chance to reset a tense relationship.

Jon Huntsman Jr., the United States envoy to Moscow, said Mr. Trump would use the meeting to "continue to hold Russia accountable for its malign activities," including Mr. Putin's election meddling and his military incursion into Ukraine. The leaders also are expected to discuss arms control and the conflict in Syria.

But there is no telling what Mr. Trump — a president who abhors long briefing papers and often disregards or defies the advice of his advisers — will choose to say while he is alone with Mr. Putin, a prospect that puts some of his aides and experienced diplomats inside and outside the government on edge.

"Putin is very clever in giving a distorted and self-serving version of history on some of these substantive issues," said Alexander Vershbow, a former United States ambassador to Russia. "He can charm Trump into changing

his position or dropping longstanding U.S. positions if he's alone with him for too long."

Such meetings are commonly referred to as one-on-one because no advisers are present, but translators for each leader would be expected to attend.

Mr. Huntsman said Mr. Trump and his administration were approaching the Putin meeting "with our eyes wide open" — the same phrase they used in the run-up to Mr. Trump's summit meeting in Singapore with Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader. That session was convened to discuss nuclear disarmament by Pyongyang.

"You can't solve problems if you're not talking about them," Mr. Huntsman said Thursday during a briefing for reporters about the meeting. Mr. Trump thinks a better relationship between Russia and the United States would be good for both, he said, "but the ball really is in Russia's court, and the president will continue to hold Russia accountable for its malign activity."

He said that Mr. Trump saw a one-on-one exchange as vital to starting a dialogue with Mr. Putin. But Mr. Huntsman played down the prospects for any breakthroughs, saying, "The fact that we're having a summit at this level at this time in history is a deliverable in and of itself."

Still, there are serious issues to be discussed. Mr. Trump is likely to raise the prospect of extending the New Start arms reduction treaty, Mr. Huntsman said, and to urge Russia to return to compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, after Moscow tested and deployed a cruise missile prohibited under the pact.

Yet Mr. Trump's advisers concede they cannot be certain of what he will choose to say or do.

Mr. Huntsman said the United States and Russia have yet to hold the kind of "direct conversations, across-the-table conversations — about things like election meddling and malign activity — that really do need to take place." But he said it would be up to Mr. Trump to choose how he wished to broach those topics with Mr. Putin.

The Trump administration over all has been far tougher on Russia than the president himself has been willing to be, at least in public. Mr. Trump in recent weeks has spoken openly about readmitting Russia into the Group of 7, the club of industrialized democracies from which it was expelled in 2014 after Mr. Putin annexed Crimea.

In the past, Mr. Trump's informal meetings with Mr. Putin appear to have played down points of friction, particularly over the topic of Russia's election meddling, which Mr. Putin has vehemently denied. Mr. Trump has often contended that talk of Russian election meddling is an overblown accusation meant to undercut his legitimacy, even though such statements are contrary to the findings of the United States intelligence community, which concluded that it was a serious effort by Mr. Putin himself.

When the two met on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit meeting about a year ago in Hamburg, Germany, American officials said Mr. Trump confronted Mr. Putin about the election meddling, but the Russian president denied it and both agreed it was time to move beyond the matter. Russian officials said Mr. Trump had "accepted" Mr. Putin's denial and told him that certain people in the United States were "exaggerating" the issue.

Mr. Trump said that he had raised the subject with Mr. Putin again during a discussion on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation gathering in November in Da Nang, Vietnam, and that he believed the Russian president's denials were sincere. Mr. Trump said then that the continued focus on election meddling was "insulting" to Mr. Putin, and called the special counsel investigation about it a Democratic "hit job" that was hindering progress between the two countries on other issues.

Russian Court Fines Radio Free Europe For Breaking "Foreign Agent" Law

By Andrew Osborn

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

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We Already Gave Syria To Putin, So What's Left For Trump To Say?

By Dennis Ross

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

Dennis Ross, a distinguished fellow at the Washington Institute, served in senior national security positions in the Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Clinton and Obama administrations.

Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result may not meet the clinical definition of insanity, but it's still a pretty good standard. It also happens to define both President Barack Obama's and President Trump's approaches to working with Russia on the Syrian civil war. Washington and Moscow have repeatedly issued joint statements outlining principles for addressing the conflict and reducing its horrific humanitarian consequences. Yet over and over again, the Russians have betrayed their commitments.

Consider the record. In November 2015, Secretary of State John F. Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reached an agreement on the Vienna principles. They called for a cessation of hostilities; lifting the sieges on all cities; the unimpeded provision of food, medicine and other humanitarian materials; the drafting of a constitution in six months; and a political transition process of 18 months. In December 2015, these principles were enshrined in U.N.

Security Council Resolution 2254. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime blatantly violated all of the terms: It lifted no sieges and did not allow humanitarian relief to pass unimpeded.

The Russians, too, did nothing. Although Assad and the Russians did finally implement a cease-fire two months later, it collapsed by April 2016 as the Assad regime resumed its onslaught against civilian targets, with a special emphasis on hospitals. Much as in his use of chemical weapons, Assad hit hospitals to show that he would respect no limits. Kerry was reduced to condemning Assad's attacks while plaintively appealing to Moscow to act on the responsibility enshrined in the December 2015 resolution. "We all signed the same agreement and we all supported the same UN Security Council Resolution 2254, which calls for a nationwide cessation of hostilities," he said, adding that "it calls for a nationwide, full delivery of humanitarian assistance within all of Syria."

Clear words, but no consequences. Not surprisingly, Kerry's calls were in vain. By the fall of 2016 he tried again, reaching an agreement on a joint operations center with the Russians in the hopes of reducing the violence and making a political process possible. Once again he was frustrated, declaring that he had "profound doubt about whether Russia and the Assad regime can or will live up to the obligations that they agreed to in Geneva." The Russian response was to launch a scorched-earth attack on Aleppo, which reduced the eastern half of the city — then Syria's largest — to rubble. That ended Kerry's efforts.

Trump has made his own attempts to get somewhere with the Russians. On the margins of the Group of 20 summit in Germany in July 2017, he and Putin finalized a cease-fire agreement for southwestern Syria. Trump met again with Putin in November at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Vietnam, where they issued another joint statement on Syria. It emphasized the "importance of de-escalation areas as an interim step to reduce violence in Syria, enforce cease-fire agreements, facilitate unhindered humanitarian access, and set the conditions for the ultimate political solution to the conflict" on the basis of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254.

So how did the Russians act after that? Along with the Assad regime and the Iranians, they waged military campaigns that decimated and depopulated three of the four de-escalation areas. The fourth, the one Trump and Putin had agreed to in southwestern Syria, remained quiet — effectively freeing the Assad regime, with its Russian backers, to attack elsewhere.

Lately Assad and the Russians have turned their attention to southwestern Syria, bombing relentlessly. On June 21, the State Department issued a blunt statement warning the Assad regime and the Russian government about "serious repercussions of these violations." The

Russians intensified their bombing, creating a new refugee flow with more than 270,000 people fleeing to the Jordanian and Israeli borders. Did Moscow face any "serious repercussions"? No — only Trump's pursuit of a summit with Putin.

Neither Obama nor Trump has been prepared to impose any consequences on the Russians. Both wanted out of Syria, not to be embroiled in it. And both permitted Putin to become the arbiter of events. So what should Trump do when he and Putin meet in Helsinki on July 16?

He should make a virtue of necessity and convey the following points: that the United States will maintain our small presence in Syria until the Islamic State is gone; that unless Iran's continuing entrenchment in Syria is contained, it will trigger a wider war between Israel and the Iranians; and that we will back the Israelis completely, making it in Putin's interest to stop the expansion of the Iranians and their proxies in Syria and prevent a major regional escalation. Trump might even suggest that the Russians broker a set of red lines between the Israelis and Iranians in Syria.

Indeed, Trump could also ask Putin to be his channel to the Iranians. Apart from limiting the potential for miscalculation with Tehran, it could give Putin a stake in coordinating with us on Iran. With the United States having already conceded Syria to Russia, history tells us we are unlikely to achieve more.

US Says No Softening In Stand As Envoy Heads To North Korea

By Andrew Harnik

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — The State Department pushed back Thursday against suggestions the Trump administration has softened its stance on North Korea as the top U.S. diplomat traveled to Pyongyang for crucial nuclear talks.

Spokeswoman Heather Nauert told journalists accompanying Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that U.S. policy has not changed and that, "We are committed to a denuclearized North Korea."

Pompeo is due in Pyongyang on Friday. He will be pressing for North Korea to take concrete action to back up its broad commitment to "complete denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula made at the June 12 summit between President Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un.

"Looking forward to continuing our work toward the final, fully verified denuclearization of #DPRK, as agreed to by Chairman Kim. Good to have the press along for the trip," Pompeo tweeted Thursday. DPRK is the abbreviation of the authoritarian nation's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Despite reports that North Korea is continuing to expand facilities related to its nuclear and missile programs and that U.S. intelligence is skeptical about its intentions to give up its weapons, Trump has remained upbeat, tweeting this week, "Many good conversations with North Korea."

There's been mixed messaging from the administration before what promises to be a tough negotiation to get the Pyongyang to roll back its weapons capabilities.

National security adviser John Bolton, who has expressed hardline views on North Korea, said Sunday that Pompeo will present Pyongyang with a plan to complete the dismantling of the North's nuclear and missile programs in one year. On Tuesday, Nauert walked that back, declining to give a timeline. Pompeo himself has previously said the U.S. wanted North Korea to take "major" disarmament steps in the next two years before Trump completes his first term in office.

This will be Pompeo's third trip to North Korea in three months. He last visited in May ahead of the Trump-Kim summit and traveled there secretly in early April while he was director of the CIA.

Pyongyang will be the first stop on his first around-the-world trip as America's top diplomat. He will then travel to Japan, Vietnam and the United Arab Emirates before heading to Belgium, where he will accompany Trump at the NATO summit in Brussels.

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As Pompeo Heads To North Korea, State Department Denies Softening

By Reuters Editorial
[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

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Trump's Focus On War Dead Complicates Pompeo's North Korea Mission

By Kanga Kong
[Bloomberg News](#), July 5, 2018

As U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo heads to Pyongyang to discuss North Korea's disarmament, another issue risks overshadowing his primary mission: the return of thousands of American war dead.

Recovering the bodies of troops killed in the Korean War is expected to be high on Pompeo's agenda, after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un committed during his June 12 summit with President Donald Trump to the "immediate repatriation" of identified remains. North Korea hadn't handed over the bodies by the time Pompeo left Washington on

Thursday, building pressure on him to broker their release during the trip.

Fresh speculation about soldiers and Marines missing for almost 70 years illustrates how Trump's agreement with Kim last month raised new issues, even as it left unanswered key questions about how and when North Korea might disarm. The focus on their return gives Kim an emotionally-charged bargaining chip to play before discussing any details about dismantling reactors and missiles.

North Korea is holding about 200 sets of remains from among the some 5,300 American military personnel believed still lost in the country, according to Department of Defense estimates. Caskets that the U.S. shipped to South Korea to collect the remains haven't been filled.

'Psychological Burden'

North Korea "knows how much the U.S. wants them back," said Shin Beomchul, director of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies's Center for Security and Unification. "Pompeo, whose responsibilities are already heavy with the mission to make the North abandon its weapons, will feel a psychological burden, because it's almost unthinkable that he would fail to bring them back."

Expectations for the soldiers' return have been raised by Trump himself, who has touted the agreement amid bipartisan criticism that his unprecedented meeting with Kim failed to establish a framework for the country's "complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament." The president told reporters after the summit that Kim "was really very gracious" and immediately agreed to return the remains in response to his own spur-of-the-moment request.

Trump continued to raise hopes in the subsequent days, telling Fox News that Kim was "giving us back the remains of probably 7,500 soldiers" and supporters in Nevada that North Korea had already handed over 200 sets of remains. Pompeo told U.S. Senate committee June 27 that no exchanges have been made, although he was optimistic they would take place "in the not-too-distant future."

Tangible Outcome

The release of the remains would provide a tangible outcome for Pompeo, even if he fails to narrow differences over the speed and scope of North Korea's "complete denuclearization." After his previous trip to Pyongyang in May, the secretary of state returned with three American prisoners, a North Korean gesture that provided Trump a moment of triumph and paved the way for the summit.

"It would be another drama, if Pompeo comes back with the remains on his plane," said Ahn Chan-il, a former North Korean soldier who defected in 1979 and now heads the World Institute for North Korea Studies. "By turning attention to the war dead issue or the broader humanitarian issues, North Korea is winning the effect of distracting from the denuclearization talks."

The recovery of war dead has long been among the most fraught issues between the U.S. and North Korea, dating back to even before the two sides formally stopped fighting. Joint efforts to find and identify U.S. personnel between 1990 and 2005 recovered more than 300 sets of remains and were suspended as nuclear talks between the two sides deteriorated. North Korea last repatriated the remains of six individuals in 2007. 'Hostile Policy'

Obama administration attempts to restart discussions foundered as Kim accelerated his nuclear program. In 2014, the state-run Korean Central News Agency published a statement blaming the U.S.'s "hostile policy" for ending the recovery missions and warning that the bodies of American soldiers were being "carried away en-masse" to make way for infrastructure improvements.

One question is what if anything the U.S. will pay for the remains, something North Korea has requested in the past and could violate international sanctions the Trump administration sought to isolate the regime. North Korean officials have told their U.S. counterparts that they wouldn't seek compensation for the next exchange, but reserved the right to do so in the future, South Korea's DongA Ilbo newspaper reported Thursday, citing unidentified people familiar with the dialogue.

Lee Shin-wha, who teaches international politics at Korea University and advised the unification and foreign ministry, said such questions indicate the Trump administration has put too many issues on the agenda.

"For the U.S., the war dead may be simply a humanitarian issue," Lee said. "But for the North, it's a more complicated one that can be used to distract from the disarmament talks and earn itself some money."

— With assistance by David Tweed

White House Stands By Embattled Israel Ambassador

By Adam Kredo

[Washington Free Beacon](#), July 5, 2018

The White House and leading lawmakers are dismissing a liberal Middle East policy group's escalating attacks on the U.S. ambassador to Israel, according to conversations with Trump administration officials and others who spoke to the Washington Free Beacon about the situation.

J Street, a liberal advocacy group viewed as operating on the fringes of the Jewish community due to its harsh criticism of Israel, recently called for U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman to be recalled from his post for promoting closer U.S.-Israel ties as he carries out President Donald Trump's policy priorities in the region, which included relocating the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to the country's capital city of Jerusalem.

While Friedman has been hailed by Republicans for his work to repair the historically close U.S.-Israel relationship that had frayed during the Obama administration, J Street and its allies have been attacking the diplomat for recent comments stating, "There's no question Republicans support Israel more than Democrats."

J Street has repeatedly been on the losing side of confrontations with the Trump administration. Its efforts to save the Iran nuclear deal, oppose Friedman's nomination, stop the U.S. embassy move to Jerusalem, torpedo the nomination of current Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and numerous others, have all failed in recent months.

J Street, which has long found itself isolated in the Jewish and foreign policy communities, is now calling for a Senate investigation into Friedman as part of what many insiders described to the Free Beacon as a smear campaign meant to undermine the ambassador and the Trump administration's increasing efforts to foster peace between the Israelis and Palestinians.

The White House is standing firmly behind Friedman. A spokesperson for the White House National Security Council said that Friedman will continue to build increased ties between the America and Israel.

"Ambassador Friedman is among those tasked by the President with strengthening the relations between the United States and Israel," the official told the Free Beacon. "He has done so effectively and diplomatically."

J Street's attacks on Friedman also have received sharp criticism from American lawmakers and Israel's former ambassador to the United States under the Obama administration.

Friedman "is doing a fantastic job and the attacks against him by the Soros-backed, anti-Israel group J Street are as misguided as they are predictable," Rep. Ron DeSantis (R., Fla.), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, wrote on Twitter. "The US-Israel relationship is stronger than ever and David's strong diplomacy is a key reason why."

Elliott Abrams, a foreign policy expert who served as a top official in both the Reagan and Bush administrations, also dismissed attacks from J Street.

"The J Street attacks on Amb. Friedman are shameful, hitting a new low even for J Street. No administration has called the Israeli settlements 'illegal,' and the most common way the State Department has referred to them for decades is as 'unhelpful' to the 'peace process,'" said Abrams. "Amb. Friedman is committing what J Street thinks are crimes: he is celebrating the American-Israeli alliance, celebrating the current administration's strong support for Israel, and defending Israel strongly against unfair attacks. We are used to seeing our U.N. ambassadors do that—from Moynihan and Kirkpatrick to Bolton and Haley—but not to seeing our ambassador to Israel do it. J Street will not forgive him for all

this, especially as he now does it from Jerusalem and not Tel Aviv, but the truth is he deserves commendation for this work.”

Friedman also received support from Michael Oren, an Israeli lawmaker who served as Israel’s ambassador to the U.S. from 2009 to 2013.

“J Street’s problem is not with Amb. Friedman but with democracy,” Oren wrote on Twitter. “It supported the previous ambassador who represented his president’s policies on Israel but not the current one who does the same. J Street opposes the more pro-Israel policy and the will of the American people.”

Trump administration insiders who work on Israel issues have mocked J Street’s campaign against Friedman behind closed doors. While the group calls on the Senate to recall him from his post, that legislative body has no power to carry out such an action. Only a president can recall his own ambassador.

“What a bunch of clowns,” said one senior U.S. official who works on regional issues. “J Street spent eight years driving a wedge between the United States and Israel. They said Republicans who supported Israel were warmongers and traitors. They said Democrats who attacked and endangered Israel actually had Israel’s best interests at heart. Their conventions these days are like a who’s-who of Israel haters from the Obama administration.”

“Adults don’t take J Street seriously at all, and even the people who sign their petitions are mostly humoring them to make them go away,” the source said.

J Street promoted a series of misleading half-truths and outright lies in its public attacks on Friedman, including falsely accusing him of being involved with a designated terror organization.

In its release, J Street alleges that Friedman, while the head of a pro-Israel group called Beit El Yeshiva Center, helped funnel “thousands of dollars to [a] right-wing extremist group named Komemiyut.”

While a group by that name is on the U.S. designated terrorist list, initial reports tying Friedman to the organization were later corrected to explain that there is another group called Komemiyut that is wholly separate and unaffiliated with the organization on the terror list.

J Street additionally charged that Friedman is unilaterally altering longstanding U.S. policy of so-called settlement activity in Israel due to recent comments by him stating, “I don’t believe the settlements are illegal.”

However, J Street confuses actual American government policy on settlements, particularly that of the Obama administration, which never stated that settlements are “illegal,” but rather “illegitimate,” a significant legal distinction.

J Street further promotes the lie that no Democratic U.S. lawmakers were invited to the new U.S. embassy

opening in Jerusalem. In fact, there was an open invitation to all lawmakers, but not a single Democrat accepted it.

Noah Pollak, a Middle East expert, told the Free Beacon that J Street, long on the far left, has become unhinged since Trump took office.

“J Street has always had a casual relationship with the truth, but the smears against Ambassador Friedman are breathtakingly dishonest even grading on the J Street curve,” Pollak said. “Why have they become this crazy? The extent of their derangement is proportional to the extent of their failure. There is no longer a policy agenda, so any attack will suffice, the more emotionally satisfying the better.”

Israel Threatens Syria Over Golan Deployment, Extends Refugee Aid

By Dan Williams

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

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Rouhani Tells Macron Europe’s Package Does Not Meet Iranian Demands: IRNA

By Reuters Editorial

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

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Trump Sanctions Top Nicaraguan Officials For Attacks On Demonstrators

By Franco Ordoñez

[McClatchy](#), July 5, 2018

The Trump administration slapped sanctions Thursday on three top Nicaraguan officials – including an in-law of President Daniel Ortega — accusing them of human rights abuses, corruption and ordering attacks on peaceful protesters.

The sanctions come as Washington turns up the heat on Nicaragua, where more than 200 people have died in two months of anti-government protests.

“The United States will not stand by idly in the face of the abuses taking place in Nicaragua,” a senior administration official said. “Rather we will expose and hold accountable those responsible for the Nicaraguan government’s ongoing violence and intimidation campaign against its people.”

The U.S. Treasury Department is targeting three top officials for human rights abuses under the U.S. Global Magnitsky Act, which allows the executive branch to impose visa bans and targeted sanctions on individuals anywhere in the world responsible for committing human rights violations or engaging in corrupt activity.

The officials include Francisco Lopez, head of the private company ALBANISA, a joint venture between the Venezuelan state-owned oil company, PDVSA, and its Nicaraguan counterpart. They targeted Francisco Diaz, who leads the National Police and, critics charge, orchestrated the repression and killing of Nicaraguans. Diaz's daughter is married to Ortega's son.

They also targeted Fidel Antonio Moreno Briones, who the Trump administration said has directed attacks against demonstrators for years and is seen as the main link between the municipal government and the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

The sanctions means that that the targeted people don't have access to any property they have within U.S. Also, U.S. businesses or American individuals are prohibited from engaging in transactions with the sanctioned individuals.

"Under Francisco Javier Diaz Madriz's command, Nicaragua's National Police has engaged in serious human rights abuse against the people of Nicaragua," Heather Nauert, the State Department spokeswoman said. "Fidel Antonio Moreno Briones has directed acts of violence committed by the Sandinista Youth and pro-government armed groups which have been implicated in numerous human rights abuses related to the ongoing protests against the Nicaraguan government. Jose Francisco Lopez Centeno is the vice president of ALBANISA, the president of Petronic, and the treasurer of the ruling FSLN party and has been accused of leveraging his position to his and his family's benefit by using companies they own to win government contracts."

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fl., and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fl., quickly welcomed the sanctions against the Ortega regime.

"Time is running out for Ortega to address the current crisis by holding early, free & fair elections," Rubio tweeted.

Today the U.S. will sanction additional members of the Ortega government in #Nicaragua. Time is running out for Ortega to address the current crisis by holding early, free & fair elections.

I welcome Admin's additional sanctions on #Ortega's thugs responsible 4 violence + murders in #Nicaragua. I led letter asking 4 Francisco Diaz + Francisco Lopez 2 b held accountable under #GlobalMagnitsky 4 rampant #humanrights abuses + corruption. <https://t.co/i6hhe9Vr7g>

"As so many Nicaraguans exercise their rights to free speech and assembly, the violence in Nicaragua continues unabated with almost 300 people killed at the hands of the Ortega regime," said Ros-Lehtinen, who has introduced a resolution urging the Trump administration to impose more sanctions. "Though the State Department has rightfully imposed visa restrictions to some of Ortega's puppets, this resolution empowers the administration to go further to

identify and sanction those who have engaged in acts of oppression in accordance with our laws."

In May, senior administration officials told McClatchy they were crafting a range of options, including potential sanctions, against the government of Nicaragua and Ortega if it fails to properly address the concerns of student groups, church leaders and other civic players about increasing violence and political repression. Last month, Ros-Lehtinen urged the White House to sanction Lopez and Diaz.

Vice President Mike Pence, UN Ambassador Nikki Haley and Mark Green, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, among others have publicly condemned the Nicaraguan government's aggressive reaction to the protests.

Nicaragua has been relatively stable in the region for years, enticing Americans to visit for beach vacations. And the Ortega administration benefited from a relatively strong economy in part due to years of support in the forms of cash and oil from Venezuela and former leader Hugo Chávez, aid that helped Ortega gain popularity and power.

Now flights going to Nicaragua are largely empty of tourists as sweeping protests have shattered the image of a peaceful country.

"The Nicaraguan government's violent response has included beating of journalists, attacks against local TV and radio stations and assaults on mothers mourning the deaths of their children," another senior administration official said. "At the Treasury Department, we're taking immediate action to address these serious abuses of human rights and corruption in Nicaragua."

Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega Leads Violent Clampdown Amid Fears Of Coup, Civil War

By Frederic Puglie - Special To The Washington Times
[Washington Times](#), July 3, 2018

When Nicaraguan guerrilla leader Daniel Ortega first took power in mid-1979, his admirers included a 17-year-old Caracas high school dropout who celebrated a "newly lit light" in Latin America as he maneuvered his bus around Venezuela's hilly capital.

Nearly four decades down the road, the driver, Nicolas Maduro, clings to power as his country's embattled president, and it seems to be the increasingly unpopular Mr. Ortega who is taking cues from his Venezuelan counterpart as he tries to hold on to power.

It has been a stunning comedown for Mr. Ortega, who led the anti-U.S. Sandinista movement in the Reagan era and seemed so secure in power two years ago that he engineered the election of his wife as vice president in a landslide electoral win.

All that has changed since an outbreak of popular discontent in April. It is so severe that some warn of a coup and others fear the country could face another civil war.

Faced with nationwide protests — initially over a pension reform but rapidly expanding against his autocratic rule overall — Mr. Ortega has led a violent clampdown, with security forces and paramilitary forces killing an estimated 297 demonstrators in less than three months. That number exceeds the deaths from political protests in Mr. Maduro's Venezuela in the same period.

It's not a stretch, then, that Mr. Ortega may be borrowing a page from his Venezuelan ally's playbook, Stephen Kinzer, a senior fellow at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, told *The Washington Times*.

"I think he probably is looking at the Maduro example and thinking to himself, 'This guy survived for years even though most of the people in his country are rebelling against him. I can do the same thing,'" said Mr. Kinzer, author of the classic "Blood of Brothers" account of Nicaragua's 1980s civil war.

Absent a viable exit strategy, holding on to power, whatever the cost, may seem like the only viable road to the 72-year-old leader, who remained Nicaragua's dominant political figure even during a 17-year hiatus starting in 1990 when he did not hold high elective office, Mr. Kinzer said.

The analyst said the situation is particularly dangerous because Mr. Ortega appears to have few options other than trying to brazen it out.

"What's the alternative for him? Don't forget that over all these tyrants like Ortega hangs the threat of accountability," Mr. Kinzer said. "Once you're out, you no longer control the courts, you no longer control investigators or the police, [and] everything is going to come out."

For the time being, though, Mr. Ortega and his wife and vice president, Rosario Murillo, remain firmly in control. In a show of strength on Tuesday, they dispatched hundreds of police and paramilitary fighters to the towns of La Trinidad and Jinotepe, where students and farmers had set up roadblocks as part of the anti-government protests.

The forces used live ammunition to fire on the demonstrators, causing an unknown number of injuries, local human rights activists told the DPA wire service. Mr. Ortega celebrated the assault as "good news for trucks and trailers." He noted dryly that "traffic in that zone has been normalized."

But signs are growing that the president's position has been shaken. Former President Enrique Bolanos has called on Mr. Ortega to step down, and even the president's brother, Humberto Ortega, a former head of the army, called this week on his brother to hold early elections next year and to restrain the pro-government youth groups that many blame for provoking the violent street clashes of the past three months, *The Associated Press* reported Thursday.

But the leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front may be overplaying his hand, said Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, who, as a member of one of the country's most storied political clans, served as a leader of the U.S.-backed anti-Sandinista Contras and later in various Cabinet posts, including defense minister.

Popular unease over Mr. Ortega's authoritarianism had long been brewing, Mr. Chamorro told *The Times*, but the staggering level of violence shook up Nicaraguans used to a quarter-century of relative calm, particularly compared with their Central American neighbors in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

"If Daniel Ortega hadn't turned to repression, to violence against peaceful demonstrators, nothing would have happened," he said. "[But with] blood spilt in the streets of Managua, the murders of children, of youngsters, of students — and to continue it instead of stopping it — the thing has already turned irreversible."

Mr. Chamorro, whose father's 1978 assassination sparked the Sandinista Revolution and whose mother, Violeta Chamorro, defeated Mr. Ortega in the 1990 presidential elections, now has his hopes pinned on Catholic Church-mediated talks, which resumed late last month after initial setbacks.

Leadership surrounding Cardinal Leopoldo Brenes, Managua's archbishop, who this week in Rome briefed Pope Francis on the negotiations, has reportedly been quite forward in pushing for presidential elections as early as March.

Although not inclined to leave either quickly or quietly, Mr. Ortega also may no longer hold the political capital to serve out his term, nominally set to end in 2021, said Christine Wade, a political scientist at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland.

"The government has accepted [the church] as mediators," Ms. Wade, a co-author of "Nicaragua: Emerging from the Shadow of the Eagle," told *The Times*. "[And] early elections is probably the best-case scenario for the protest movement at this point, because I don't anticipate that he's simply going to resign."

But as Nicaraguans and foreign policymakers alike try to gauge the intentions of Mr. Ortega, Ms. Wade cautions against painting the Nicaraguan leftist with the same brush as Mr. Maduro or his mentor, the late anti-U.S. populist Hugo Chavez.

"Ortega was around far before the likes of Hugo Chavez emerged, [and] unlike Maduro, I would expect an Ortega as probably weighing his legacy and the legacy of the revolution at the same moment," she said. "Thinking about an exit strategy is something they're probably doing with some seriousness."

Still, old habits die hard, Ms. Wade said, and the situation will likely get worse before it gets better.

"We're dealing with an administration that's battle-hardened: These are old-guard revolutionaries. They fought and won wars.

"There's a bit of a siege mentality that is part of the current thinking."

Old history — as in the often-troubled ties between Nicaragua and the United States — could prove a factor as the U.S. government ponders how to approach the Nicaraguan crisis. Less will be more in this conflict, virtually all observers agree.

"I'd love to see the United States take its hands off Nicaragua," Mr. Kinzer said. "We will completely delegitimize this great, peaceful social movement if we barge into it."

The Trump administration, which is reportedly considering duplicating its sanctions on Maduro officials with high-ranking government officials in Nicaragua, should tread lightly so as not to provide fodder to those aiming to distort legitimate protests as imperialist meddling, Ms. Wade said.

"Back-channel discussions are helpful, public condemnations of violence are appropriate, but overall, the United States would do very well to keep a low profile in this particular conflict," she said. "We've already seen that there are forces ... trying to say, 'This protest movement is another U.S. destabilization attempt.'"

Even if the situation further deteriorates, Ms. Wade said, it's unlikely that the United States will see an influx of refugees from Nicaragua the way violence and gang wars have sparked an exodus from other Central American countries, because Nicaraguans fleeing violence would be more likely to seek shelter in Costa Rica or Panama.

For other regional players, Nicaragua's powder keg may even present an opportunity, Mr. Kinzer said. The Organization of American States, long viewed as toothless, could play a role, he said, as could Mexican President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador.

Another regional group, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, announced this week that a team of independent investigators had set up in Nicaragua to investigate political violence that has rocked the country since April.

There may be ideological overlap between Mr. Ortega and Mr. Lopez Obrador, Mr. Kinzer said. But unlike his Nicaraguan counterpart, Mexico's incoming president has always respected the electoral process and has made a number of pragmatic moves since his electoral triumph, he added.

"Ortega is just the opposite of that, so the idea that [Mr. Lopez Obrador] would be an instinctive ally of Ortega is a big stretch," he said. "He could definitely posit himself as a person whose own background requires him to condemn what's happening in Nicaragua."

Whether such condemnation, renewed protests or mediation talks can ultimately keep Mr. Ortega from trying to

use the Maduro model to hold on to power, meanwhile, remains to be seen. But perhaps one can count on its size to shield this compact nation of 6 million from becoming a second Venezuela, Mr. Kinzer said.

"Everybody in Nicaragua has a sense of being cousins; they all know each other," he said. "There's a sense of shared destiny, and I hope that will somehow contribute to some resolution of the problem."

As Mr. Ortega knows well, it would not be the first time Nicaraguans rid themselves of an autocratic leader.

"The battle cry of the Samoza era is what people are now chanting in the streets," Mr. Chamorro said. "It was: 'Nicaragua will be a republic again!'"

US Terminates Funding For Zimbabwe Rights Groups Ahead Of Election

By Ed Cropley

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

OTHER DHS NEWS

I'm From The Border. The News Is Getting It Wrong.

By Victoria Ochoa

[Washington Post](#), July 3, 2018

Victoria Ochoa is a Harry S. Truman scholar from the Rio Grande Valley and an incoming J.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

I am from la frontera, meaning "frontier" in Spanish but translated in English as "border." The news over the past few weeks might make you think that places such as my hometown — McAllen, Tex., in the Rio Grande Valley — are under siege from waves of undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers, a crisis of lawlessness so extreme that drastic measures are needed. Tearing children from their parents, or, when that proves too unpopular, corralling families in tent cities. Then there's the \$25 billion wall that's needed to safeguard the United States from the threat of being overrun.

The view from down here is different. In a 2018 rating of the 100 most dangerous cities in the United States based on FBI data, no border cities — not San Diego, not Texas cities such as Brownsville, Laredo or El Paso — appeared even in the top 60. McAllen's crime rate was lower than Houston's or Dallas's, according to Texas Monthly in 2015. The Cato Institute's research consistently shows that immigrants, both legal and undocumented, are markedly less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans.

In the U.S. borderlands with Mexico, our inherent duality is what helps our communities thrive. We work hard, attend school and worship just as Americans do all across the nation. Yet we are overwhelmingly Latino, and a quarter of us are foreign-born. We are here and there. Some of us were born here, and some of us were not. But it doesn't matter — pero ni modo — all are welcome.

Maybe it is the composition of the humble communities already established in the borderlands, not the new arrivals, that so alarms some politicians and pundits. Maybe that is why militarizing a region supposedly in crisis has come to be seen as an acceptable idea. In 2016, Texas deployed 250 state troopers to our region, and in 2017, Gov. Greg Abbott (R) signed off on an \$800 million allocation for border security (yet vetoed nearly \$860,000 for the Colonias Initiative Project, a long-running state effort to help poor communities on the Texas border obtain drinking water, wastewater service and roads).

This year, Congress approved 100 miles of border wall, and federal authorities are beginning the process of seizing land for it in my hometown. In April, the Defense Department began sending National Guard personnel to the border with Mexico, with as many as 4,000 troops authorized for deployment. The number of U.S. Border Patrol agents at the border is also rising.

The government has a responsibility to police the nation's borders, and I am grateful for the people who keep us safe. But today's military presence and stepped-up law enforcement remind me that this isn't the first time that politicians have used Texas's southern border to burnish their tough-on-crime credentials.

In 1915, the Texas Rangers were sent to establish control of the border when the Mexican Revolution prompted an increase in Mexican immigration and a threat to Anglo dominance in the region. Rangers and civilian vigilantes massacred hundreds of Tejanos with no repercussions.

Nothing so extreme is conceivable today, but killings of immigrants by law enforcement in the borderlands still happen. In South Texas, we are still waiting to find out why a U.S. Border Patrol agent in May shot to death Claudia Patricia Gomez Gonzalez, a 20-year-old Guatemalan. According to news reports, she was trained as an accountant and, unable to find work, had traveled 1,500 miles in search of a better life. She was killed a mile into U.S. territory, in Rio Bravo, about 130 miles from McAllen in the same region where hundreds were massacred before.

The heavy-handed law-enforcement presence in this region creates a climate of fear and mistrust. Residents are routinely stopped for no clear reason. Texas law now encourages local law-enforcement officers to hand over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement people who are in the country illegally. Border Patrol agents are known to ride with state troopers; in an area that is 88 percent Latino, routine

traffic stops are regarded as a tool for implementing federal immigration law.

Enforcement is ripe for the intimidation of noncitizens and citizens alike. At a Border Patrol checkpoint 74 miles from the actual border, agents have asked my purpose for leaving the area.

I wonder what will finally placate the fearful people 1,500 miles away who sent these border agents and National Guard troops to the borderlands. More checkpoints, more families detained, vaster tent cities? Maybe the wall they dream of? For most people, or most open-minded people, a simple visit might be enough to be reassured that this is not a scary place. It's my home. Mi frontera. My frontier.

Some Detention Centers For Migrant Children Not Subject To State Inspections

By Graham Kates

[CBS News](#), July 5, 2018

A loophole in federal policy allows the "Tent City" at the Tornillo Port of Entry in Texas and a massive shelter in Homestead, Florida to escape the rigorous, often unannounced child welfare inspections that nearly all other similar shelters are subjected to.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) operates more than 100 shelters for unaccompanied migrant children across 17 states. All but two — Tornillo and Homestead, housing more than 1,350 children combined — must comply with state regulations that govern nearly every aspect of a child's stay.

Tornillo and Homestead are located on federal land, where state officials have no authority.

Paul Zimmerman, a spokesperson for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, describes the state inspections as rigorous. "There are thousands of minimum standards and regulations, but when an inspector goes out to a facility they'll look at record keeping, whether it's secure, child-to-caregiver ratio," said Zimmerman, whose agency was responsible for inspections at all child care facilities in Texas until September 2017 when Texas legislation shifted its responsibilities.

The Texas agency now in charge of state inspections, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, confirmed that it does not oversee the Tornillo facility.

The Tornillo facility is managed by the nonprofit BCFS. A representative of the nonprofit acknowledged it isn't subject to frequent state child welfare inspections, but said the organization is required to follow guidelines mandated by the "Flores settlement," stemming from the Supreme Court case *Flores v. Reno*.

That settlement set rules for the treatment of immigrant minors in federal custody — including mandating that shelters

meet state standards, but there is currently no mechanism to enforce those standards.

In response to questions about its shelters on federal land, HHS said the Tornillo and Homestead facilities are expected to follow regulations laid out in the Office of Refugee Resettlement policy manual, which includes an extensive array of standards governing health care, case work, abuse prevention and child welfare.

"As you can see in our policy guide there are very high standards for children in our care," wrote Kenneth Wolfe, a spokesperson for HHS' Administration for Children and Families, which oversees ORR, in an email to CBS News.

The manual states care providers must abide by all state laws and regulations governing child care and child welfare. However, the manual was published in 2015, when all ORR immigrant minor shelter facilities were on state land.

A dormitory inside a tent in a federal temporary shelter for unaccompanied minors who crossed the border from Mexico to Tornillo, Texas.

New child care facilities on state land in both Texas and Florida are subject to multiple, often unannounced child welfare inspections per year, according to state guidelines. But the Tornillo and Homestead facilities can expect just one such examination, "every two years," according to the manual.

The only frequent review mandated by ORR policy is done by third-party contractors, which are not focused on child welfare.

These contractors are instead focused on providing support services for case workers, and not recommendations related to safety and healthcare, according to a spokesperson for General Dynamics Information Technology, which employs many of the contractors.

Texas inspection records indicate the more frequent surprise reviews conducted by state officials can catch major safety and health breaches, even at facilities with otherwise successful child welfare records.

In the days after public outcry about family separation brought attention to a new facility in a former Walmart, where as many as 1,500 boys were being housed, Southwest Key, the organization that operates the facility, proudly touted its inspection record. The organization said its facilities had been evaluated for compliance on more than 70,000 standards in the past three years, and only been found deficient in fewer than 1 percent.

But inspectors visiting Southwest Key facilities in the past two years caught dozens of violations, including an employee who worked four months without being fingerprinted, failures in medical recordkeeping, an instance in which a child who tested positive for a sexually transmitted disease wasn't given treatment for 18 days, and neglecting to lock up medicines and cleaning supplies.

Wolfe said the facilities at Tornillo and Homestead are not subjected to state oversight, not only because of their federal locations, but because they are planned as temporary facilities.

BCFS has a contract to operate Tornillo until July 13. It is not clear if that contract will be extended. Asked if there is a date set for either facility to close, Wolfe said only that HHS "will make determinations about opening and closing unaccompanied alien children program shelters based on the number of beds needed to provide appropriate care for minors in the program."

Homestead previously housed unaccompanied minors from June 2016 to April 1, 2017.

HHS did not respond when asked when both facilities are expected to close, but it's unlikely Tornillo and Homestead will be the last temporary facilities on federal land. The Pentagon confirmed to CBS News on June 21 that HHS officials had recently visited four Army and Air Force bases in Texas and Arkansas while researching new locations to house 20,000 unaccompanied migrant children. The bases are federal property and shelter facilities on them would not be subject to state child welfare inspections.

Philly Police And Mayor Kenney On Occupy ICE Raid: Protesters Were Repeatedly Warned

By Juliana Feliciano Reyes, Anna Orso, Chris Palmer, Rob Tornoe

[Philly \(PA\)](#), July 5, 2018

Philadelphia police abruptly raided and destroyed the "Occupy ICE" encampment set up by protesters outside the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in Center City on Thursday afternoon.

"Stay calm! Stay calm!" a protester shouted as police used bicycles to push through the encampment and knock down the protesters' tents and canopies, which had been set up in the area since Monday evening as part of a national movement calling for the abolition of ICE. Local demonstrators also have called for the closure of the federal detention center in Berks County and an end to local collaboration with federal immigration officials.

The raid occurred about 1 p.m. Thursday, roughly 10 minutes after police spoke with protesters at the front of the camp on Eighth Street and asked them to move their water coolers and other supplies off the sidewalk. The protesters began to comply, and moments later, police then asked them to also clear a space in front of the federal building. While activist Aine Fox, a representative with the Up Against the Law Legal Collective, was attempting to clarify that request with police, other officers entered the camp through the back and began pushing through the area with bicycles.

>> READ MORE: Inside the Philadelphia Occupy ICE camp that police raided Thursday

A police spokesperson, Capt. Sekou Kinebrew, later said in an interview that protesters were given “numerous warnings” and opportunities to clear the affected areas before police took action to remove the structures because the encampment had been blocking “ingress and egress” to the building, which contains offices other than ICE. Some structures had been blocking a door, Kinebrew said, while others were blocking one of the bays to the building.

He declined to respond to allegations that police moved on the camp while some protesters were discussing how to respond, saying simply: “I do know warnings were given.”

Earlier on Thursday, around 7 a.m., protesters were asked to clear an entrance to the building’s front door by officials from the Department of Homeland Security and they complied, said Anlin Wang of the Philly Socialists.

Supporters of the cause said they were shocked by the raid, given Mayor Kenney’s previous support of their efforts and Philadelphia’s status as a “sanctuary city.”

In a statement from the mayor’s office, spokesperson Deana Gamble said: “Protesters have been notified repeatedly that they are free to remain and protest at the premises, as long as they do not block the building egress or set up permanent encampments. Despite these repeated warnings today and throughout the week, a group of protesters ignored these instructions. No one, regardless of political view, is permitted to set up an encampment, and the mayor cannot make exceptions simply because he agrees with the protesters.”

It was the second time the police have charged into the Occupy ICE encampment — the first was on Tuesday, when 29 people were arrested and some officers threw away protesters’ possessions — but this was the first time officials took down the encampment, leaving demonstrators shaken and furious.

On Thursday, seven protesters were cited for failure to disperse and released, police said.

>> READ MORE: What is Immigration and Customs Enforcement? Explaining an agency under fire

“There’s a lot of crying,” said Ezra Kirk, 22, of New Jersey. “People put their heart and soul into this. Not just the camp, but the work.”

Police organized a front line, standing with bikes in the middle of the camp on Cherry Street, and continued to push forward until they reached Eighth Street, blocking everyone from where the encampment had previously sat. Protesters screamed expletives and called the officers “fascist pigs.”

Most officers stayed stone-faced, but one, who carried a nightstick under his arm, winked and made kissing noises at a woman who was filming and accusing police by name of “snatching black and brown bodies.”

Roughly 100 officers — on bikes, horses, and foot — were at the scene, and many remained long after the clearing.

Enav Emmanuel, a member of Philly Socialists, said organizers were regrouping Thursday and working to plan next steps.

Sekou, the police spokesperson, said that the Police Department’s aim was to protect the rights of protesters but that Thursday’s actions were necessary because the protest site had swelled to limit access to the building.

“Our motive and our mission is not to stop protesting,” he said.

As to criticisms that the Police Department’s actions were overly aggressive, Kinebrew said no police or protesters were injured during the altercation and said: “We took the action we thought was necessary to open up the area.”

He said that police would “take it as it comes” in determining how or whether protesters would be allowed to return to the site but that protesters and possessions “can’t block entrances” to buildings.

Kenney has declared Philadelphia a “sanctuary city,” meaning it limits its cooperation with ICE. The mayor has said he agrees with the protesters. But Thursday’s raid left some wondering: Why, then, did police clear the camp?

“The mayor strongly supports the right of individuals to protest, and he shares their frustrations with ICE,” Kenney spokesperson Gamble said in the statement. “ICE’s aggressive tactics, their separation of families, their targeting of law abiding immigrants are cruel.”

But, the statement continued: “While he agrees with the premise of the protest, he cannot make exceptions to the law and allow individuals to create a threat to public safety by blocking access to a building and setting up permanent encampments.”

Police Break Up Encampment Outside Immigration Building

By Alexandra Villarreal

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Police broke up an encampment outside an immigration office in Philadelphia on Thursday, where dozens of protesters had taken over sidewalks for a fourth day to decry U.S. immigration policies.

Police moved in around 1 p.m., about 10 minutes after police asked protesters to move coolers of water and other supplies off the sidewalk, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer. Shortly after, officers entered the camp through the back without warning, the newspaper said.

Video posted on social media shows officers pushing their bikes through the encampment, toppling tents and camping chairs, tearing down tarps and pulling some protesters across the concrete amid the chaos. In the footage, voices can be heard saying, “stay calm” and “you’re hurting people!”

Police released a statement saying protesters were blocking the entrance to the building and refusing to allow people to enter or exit.

Protesters said their occupation was to advocate for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency to be abolished; to have a family detention center about 70 miles (113 kilometers) west of Philadelphia shut down; and to urge the city to stop sharing arrest information with ICE.

"I'm here because I think ICE is a terrible organization that doesn't need to exist," said protester Tabitha Ahnert, who spent two nights sleeping outside the office.

Mayor Jim Kenney said in a statement Thursday that he couldn't allow protesters to block access to the building or set up permanent encampments.

"No one, regardless of political view, is permitted to set up an encampment and the mayor cannot make exceptions simply because he agrees with the protesters," said Kenney's spokeswoman Deana Gamble.

Philadelphia has said that as a sanctuary city it won't hand immigrants in the country illegally to Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents unless federal officials have a warrant signed by a judge.

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'Occupy ICE' Desperately Needs A Civics Lesson

By Darren E. Tromblay
[The Hill](#), July 5, 2018

Regardless of what one thinks about the merits or demerits of current U.S. immigration policies, "Occupy ICE" — the populist, progressive vilification of the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) — is a wrongheaded movement in need of a civics lesson.

Participants in the movement are making unrealistic demands and vilifying civil servants who are implementing a policy promulgated by U.S. elected officials.

Over the past several days, disruptive protests have erupted from Portland, Oregon to New York. According to the Washington Post, the nascent Occupy ICE movement erupted from a gaggle of protesters at the Portland ICE facility, who reasoned that the U.S. could not deport people if the judicial process was prevented from working and thus sought to bar judges, lawyers and litigants from the building.

The protesters in Washington, D.C., turned Occupy ICE into a personal attack on federal workers with one protester at ICE headquarters demanding to know whether officers had children and a crowd screaming, "Quit your jobs!" at ICE employees.

These protesters are conflating politics and policy. For instance, the organizer of a New York protest accused ICE of escalating "repression ... criminalization and dehumanization of immigrants as a result of [Donald] Trump's election."

There are increasing calls among these extremists to "abolish ICE," apparently in the mistaken belief that this will somehow resolve matters in illegal immigrants' favor.

Protestors' naïveté about these matters is understandable given their tenuous association with reality. Participants include prison abolitionists (ah yes, letting the criminals roam free always makes for a better society), anarchist collectives (not exactly the bellwethers of national politics) and the Democratic Socialists of America (who bring politics to the dinner table).

These groups might be appalled, or perhaps not, if they realized that their actions were degrading American society with the same corrosiveness as that which they attribute to the actions of the current White House.

By intentionally disrupting judicial proceedings, Occupy ICE protesters are clawing away at the rule of law and replacing it with unchecked emotion. Shutting down the operations of ICE — and contravening elected officials' decisions — disenfranchises the voters who, for better or worse, cast their ballots and expected results.

Furthermore, neither hurling imprecations at the ICE workforce nor demanding the abolition of ICE address the issue about which protesters are so concerned. ICE, like any other U.S. bureaucracy, has no control over politics and is simply carrying out policy promulgated by elected officials. (Also, please do not invoke the, "That's what they said in Nazi Germany, too," rejoinder. The two scenarios are not remotely comparable.)

Tearing apart ICE at this point might actually produce conditions far worse than those which Occupy ICE perceives at present. The function of immigration enforcement is not going to simply vanish. A new bureaucracy will have to fill the void.

Do the anarchists and socialists out there really want an enforcement agency crafted under a Trump administration and a Republican-dominated Congress?

Occupy ICE needs a civics lesson. Agencies do not make political decisions. Elected officials do. Attacking ICE is an assault on the rule-of-law and is a step toward disenfranchising the voting public who — rightly or wrongly — cast their ballots.

Even if the Occupy ICEs got what they wanted — the abolition of ICE — they would likely be appalled by the agency's replacement.

Darren E. Tromblay has served the U.S. intelligence community, as an intelligence analyst, for more than a decade. He is the author of "The U.S. Domestic Intelligence Enterprise: History, Development, and Operations" (Taylor &

Francis, 2015) and co-author of "Securing U.S. Innovation" (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Northeastern University Under Fire For Receiving Millions From ICE Contract

By J.D. Capelouto

[Boston Globe](#), July 5, 2018

A group made up of students, activists, and faculty members is calling on Northeastern University to drop its multimillion-dollar contract to do research for US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the government agency at the center of a national conversation on human rights and immigration.

Northeastern has received \$2.7 million from ICE over the last two years to support a faculty member's research on exports that could be used as illegal weapons, according to federal spending data available online.

An online petition launched Tuesday by Boston activist Evan Greer is urging the university to end the contract, asserting that any collaboration with ICE is immoral and irresponsible. Since posting the petition, it has garnered more than 1,200 signatures online.

"Northeastern as an institution has political power, and it needs to decide whether it wants to use that political power to fight for what's right," Greer said in an interview Thursday. "[We are] looking for this university to definitively say, 'This is wrong, we're not going to do this anymore, and we're going to stop it.'"

Glenn Pierce, a principal research scientist at Northeastern who applied for the grant in 2016, said his work focuses on export data for "dual-use" technology that could be used for illegal, destructive purposes such as terrorism.

Pierce said he understands the concerns about collaborating with ICE but said his work does not deal directly with immigration enforcement or detention.

"If someone wants to say the overall agency is a problem, then that would be a problem. . . . I get that, and I think that you could make that argument," he said. "But if you look at it a little more closely, that's not what we're doing and that's not what we want to do."

The contract could go until 2021 and total up to \$7.7 million, but the research will most likely end in August, Pierce said.

The Northeastern contract was first posted by Money.

In recent weeks, ICE's immigration policies have garnered national attention, amid calls for the agency to be abolished altogether. The agency's separation and detention of thousands of migrant families along the US-Mexico border have dominated headlines and sparked massive protests against the Trump administration's "zero-tolerance" policy for illegal immigration.

Greer, who has no direct connection to the college but works nearby, said she is worried that ICE could use Northeastern's research for harmful, unintended purposes.

"This is an agency that is violating human rights. . . . This is a moment to decide which side of history you are on," she said.

In a statement, the university defended the contract on the basis of academic freedom.

"Our commitment to academic freedom goes beyond protecting what professors say; it also means allowing faculty members to freely pursue researching funding in their fields of expertise," the statement said. "Efforts to restrict which federal agencies a faculty member can approach for research funding are antithetical to academic freedom."

The petition asks signers to identify whether they are students, alumni, or staff members. As of Thursday afternoon, 600 signers identified themselves as students, 300 as alumni, and nearly 40 as faculty/staff members.

"Northeastern University has spoken strongly in defense of our immigrant and international students in the past year, but by benefiting from any financial contract with ICE the university demeans itself and devalues those statements," Ryan Cordell, a Northeastern English professor, said in an e-mail Thursday, elaborating on several of his tweets.

Northeastern has heralded its global community and said it remains committed to diversity. Last year, the university joined 30 other universities in an amicus brief to the US Supreme Court opposing President Trump's immigration ban on several majority-Muslim countries.

Hayes Bortz, a third-year political science and economics major at Northeastern, said the university should take concrete steps to prove it "not only talks the talk, but it walks the walk."

"Given the actions that ICE has been engaged in recently and throughout its entire existence, to suggest that you can accept money from ICE in an ethical and moral way is just not possible," he said.

Trial Set For Agent Accused Of Lying About Citizenship

[Associated Press](#), July 6, 2018

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — A Sept. 5 trial has been set for a U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer in southern Arizona accused of falsely claiming he was born in the United States.

Marco Antonio De la Garza Jr. has pleaded not guilty to federal charges of making false statements to authorities.

Authorities say De la Garza claimed he was born in Brownsville, Texas, when he is in fact a native of Mexico.

He is accused of lying about his citizenship in October during a background check update tied to his job.

De la Garza also is accused of making false statements about his birth country last year when he sought a U.S. passport.

He has worked for the federal agency since April 2012.

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Donald Trump Law Enforcement Appointees Previously Worked For ICE Contractors

By Lee Fang

[Intercept](#), July 5, 2018

As the recent family separation policy demonstrates, President Donald Trump wears his zeal for immigration enforcement on his sleeve. Some of his high-level appointees wear it on their savings accounts: A handful of senior officials placed in law enforcement roles by Trump previously drew their paychecks from companies that contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The officials serve in a number of roles in federal law enforcement. Take, for instance, the top federal prosecutor in Indiana, U.S. Attorney Thomas L. Kirsch II, who was sworn in last year to serve in the Justice Department. He previously provided legal services to GEO Group, the sprawling private prison corporation that contracts with ICE to detain immigrants.

At least one official went from working with ICE contractors to working directly as a federal employee. Thomas Blank, the chief of staff at ICE, previously worked as a lobbyist at a firm called Wexler & Walker, where he specialized in helping companies secure security-related contracts before the government. His role there included working for the company now known as Axon, formerly called Taser, which contracts with ICE to supply the once-eponymous stun guns.

At Wexler & Walker, Blank worked for several years with Chad Wolf, who now works at the Department of Homeland Security, which operates ICE, as the chief of staff to Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. Wolf, for his part, played a role similar to Blank's, providing lobbying services for a variety of ICE contractors, including Harris Corp., a technology firm that provides surveillance equipment, as well as Axon.

Asked to comment on the former lobbyists' roles at DHS, a spokesperson from the department said, in an email, "Pursuant to the Ethics Pledge restrictions on incoming lobbyists, as well as the Standards of Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, no DHS employee has any conflicts of interest. All of them serve, and will continue to serve, DHS and the American people with honor and integrity." (None of the other government agencies nor the private businesses the officials worked for responded to requests for comment.)

The Department of Homeland Security is staffed by others who were on the contractor dole. Lora Ries, an adviser to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services who has called for increased "interior enforcement" against undocumented immigrants, previously worked for several DHS contractors as a lobbyist. Ries, in her most recent position before joining the Trump administration, worked as an industry strategist for CSRA, a technology firm that provides the controversial "GangNet" database solution used by ICE to target suspected gang members.

There are more former ICE contractors at the Justice Department, too. Daniel Clayton Mosteller, the U.S. marshal for South Dakota, appointed last October by Trump, previously worked for Forfeiture Support Associates, a private firm that contracts with ICE and other federal agencies to process assets seized by the government. Private businesses have long taken advantage of the steady growth of security policies aimed at tracking, detaining, and deporting people from the country. They saw a windfall in the Trump era.

Private businesses have long taken advantage of the steady growth of security policies aimed at tracking, detaining, and deporting people from the country. They saw a windfall in the Trump era. Industry groups involved in surveillance, border security, and immigration enforcement and detention have eagerly told investors that they are poised to benefit from the president's agenda. But they have been far from passive political actors. Several firms have stepped up campaign contributions to Republicans and groups viewed as friendly to Trump. Few are as brazen as the private prison industry.

GEO Group stands out as one of the only major publicly traded companies that openly supported Trump's presidential bid. The Florida-based private prison firm gave generously in support of pro-Trump Super PACs. After the election, GEO Group donated to the inauguration fund and, over the last year, contributed \$300,000 to various Super PACs set up to support congressional Republicans. Last year, the company moved its annual leadership conference to a Miami-area golf resort owned by Trump.

Like other firms involved in immigrant detention and surveillance, GEO Group has told investors that it stands to gain from the administration's policies. During a conference call with investors in April, GEO Group chief executive George Zoley said his company will seek opportunities "as the president will be asking for a significant increase in the detention bed capacity for ICE." The company now receives nearly a quarter of its revenue from ICE, up from only 10 percent a decade ago.

The role of private contractors has become the focus of fierce debate. In recent weeks, Microsoft and Thomson Reuters have come under fire for their role in providing technological solutions to ICE. But the firms that profit from

the immigration enforcement agency not only have political support from the White House; many of their former lobbyists and consultants now occupy the upper echelons of the Trump administration.

GLOBAL MEDIA

Mexico's Next Crisis Will Arrive From The South

By Shannon K O'Neil

[Bloomberg View](#), July 5, 2018

In the wake of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's historic victory, the markets are focused on Mexico's economic prospects, keenly sniffing for any whiff of either pragmatic promise or populist calamity. Yet while a financial crisis is possible, Central American migration may prove the new administration's biggest first challenge.

Since 2014, hundreds of thousands of Central American men, women and children, mostly from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, have fled their homes. Driven by violence, extortion, poverty, and a drought that has decimated subsistence farming, and pulled by family connections and the hope of safe haven, they mostly head north.

This desperate exodus brought some 280,000 migrants to the southern U.S. border in 2014, driving a media storm and political reckoning. Images of young children spurred churches into action, political demonstrations across the country, and even conservative talk show host Glenn Beck to drive to the border with a truckload of teddy bears and soccer balls. Congress doled out extra money to care for more than 50,000 Central American "unaccompanied alien children," or UACs in the Department of Homeland Security's parlance; the Obama administration worked with the presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to launch the Alliance for Prosperity, a two-year \$1.4 billion dollar plan to spur better governance and economic development.

In 2015 the massive migrant wave to the U.S. border diminished, and the cameras largely turned away. Yet the precipitous decline wasn't because Central Americans stopped leaving their homes. It was because Mexico stopped letting them through. Backed by more than \$150 million in U.S. funding, Mexico tightened its southern border, expanding checkpoints, boosting manpower, and using fingerprinting and facial-scanning to identify and detain crossers. The government even cracked down on the infamous La Bestia ("the beast") freight trains that carried thousands from the southern border city of Tapachula north. That year, Mexico apprehended and deported more Central Americans than its northern neighbor.

This status quo of Mexico stopping tens of thousands of families each year may soon end. On the campaign trail, Lopez Obrador promised to loosen Pena Nieto's southern

border defense, refusing to "continue the dirty work" of the United States by detaining Central American migrants who are fleeing violence.

As Mexico looks to ease up on its southern border, the U.S. is strengthening enforcement. President Trump's pullback from separating young children from their parents at the border — spurred by negative media coverage — is just a brief hiatus from an ever-hardening position toward Central American migrants and asylum seekers. The Department of Justice has rewritten the asylum guidelines, raising the credible fear bar asylum seekers must reach, and all but disqualifying those fleeing criminal and domestic violence, thereby denying most Central American claims. The administration has slashed refugee spots by more than half, and tinkered with rules to deny many their day in court. And the U.S. is threatening to impose its own version of the European Union's Dublin Regulation, under which those seeking asylum must generally do so in their first country of arrival, thereby rendering moot the asylum claims of Central Americans crossing through Mexico. The net result: Tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of Central Americans will likely get stuck in Mexico.

There, these migrants will have expansive protections — at least on paper. A 2011 legislative reform guarantees asylum seekers quick and comprehensive consideration, legal representation, and an appeal. While in Mexico they have the right to apply for access to medical care and education. In reality, these rights are at best uneven. Amnesty International found that three out of every four migrants weren't informed of their right to seek asylum, as the law requires. Although the process has slightly improved, many asylees were detained for months, also in violation of the law. One of the problems is that Mexico's Commission for Refugee Assistance has two offices outside of the capital; its skeletal staff was able to process fewer than 5,000 cases last year. Another is the widespread corruption and violence targeting migrants, often from the agencies and officials mandated to protect them.

And Mexican society isn't ready for the influx. Not unlike the United States, some Mexicans worry immigrants will take their jobs, depress wages, or commit crimes. Violence against these newcomers has been on the rise: In 2016 alone, the Mexican government found more than 5,000 cases of crimes against migrants, nearly 20 percent at the hands of government officials.

In short, Lopez Obrador may well be caught between his promises to be more open and humane to those fleeing and the desire to no longer do president Trump's bidding, and the huge potential costs this shift could entail for his larger domestic agenda. With Mexico's migratory agencies and services so ill-equipped, absorbing an influx would take away resources away from his efforts to lift up Mexico's poor. On the other hand, if Lopez Obrador allows more Central

Americans to flow north, Trump could well respond by clamping down further, creating a greater burden for states in northern Mexico.

Mexico has long been a sending country, with millions of its citizens living abroad, mostly in the United States. It is now increasingly a receiving nation, caught between desperation to the south and xenophobia to the north, with few tools to safely manage these inflows. Lopez Obrador's team already faces the burden of realizing his expansive campaign promises. Resolving a migration crisis on its southern border may not have been high on its list. But part of governing, of course, is preparing for unpleasant surprises.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Salvadoran Asylum Seeker Mounts Legal Challenge Of Safe Third Country Agreement

By Teresa Wright

[Globe and Mail \(CAN\)](#), July 5, 2018

A Salvadoran woman and her two daughters who fled their home country after allegedly suffering extortion and rape at the hands of members of the notorious MS-13 gang are among several parties challenging the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country agreement in court.

The case has been snaking its way through Federal Court for the last year, but this week saw a flurry of new filings by three additional applicants in the case: Amnesty International, the Canadian Council for Refugees and the Canadian Council of Churches, all of them longtime critics of the agreement.

Recent changes in U.S. refugee policy, including a ruling by U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions saying domestic and gang violence are no longer grounds for asylum, make the argument for challenging the agreement even stronger, said Janet Dench, executive director of the Canadian Council for Refugees.

"Legally, our case has become much more compelling with many of the things that are being introduced under the Trump administration," Dench said.

"When you have the U.S. government taking measures such as 'zero tolerance' and such as the Sessions/presidential decision, something that legally constrains asylum, that's something the court will have to look very carefully at."

While the case itself is based on the plight of a Salvadoran woman and her daughters, it encompasses a broader challenge of the Safe Third Country agreement, or STCA, arguing it violates certain provisions of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"By returning refugee claimants to the U.S. and exposing them there to a serious risk of arbitrary, lengthy

detention and refolement (deportation), Canada violates their charter rights," the applicants argue in court documents.

"(The woman) and her daughters faced the risks described when they sought entry to Canada as refugee claimants and were refused under the STCA. This same situation is also faced by a great number of other refugee claimants prevented from entering Canada by the STCA."

Hundreds of pages of documents have been filed in Federal Court, including affidavits from refugee law experts, studies, reports and news clippings that detail the escalating risks faced by asylum seekers in the U.S.

In her affidavit, the woman – identified only as ABC – says her family became a target of MS-13 after her husband helped El Salvador police identify a gang member who killed his brother in 1993.

He fled to Canada in 2005, but was denied refugee protection because, as a teenager, he had been associated with a national liberation movement deemed by Canada to be a terrorist organization. He is appealing that decision.

Meanwhile, left alone with her daughters in El Salvador, ABC claims she faced constant threats from gang members demanding to know where her husband was. She alleges they followed her girls home from school on a regular basis and murdered her landlord.

In April 2013, she alleges gang members forced their way into her home, raped and then robbed her, threatening to kill her daughters if she went to police. She claims her youngest daughter was born as a result of the rape.

She finally decided to flee in November 2016 after she alleges gang members pointed a gun at her head and told her she had 24 hours to pay them a sum of money she didn't have.

She took her two youngest daughters, leaving two adult children behind, and embarked on a perilous journey through Mexico to Texas. After staying with family in Mississippi for a few weeks, she eventually tried to enter Canada at an official border crossing between New York and Ontario, hoping to be reunited with her husband, who remains in Canada pending the outcome of his refugee claim appeal.

The woman was told she would be deemed inadmissible, as a result of the Safe Third Country agreement. She returned to the U.S. for a few months to seek legal advice and in July 2015 once again tried to cross the Canada-U.S. border, was deemed inadmissible and filed her legal challenge.

The woman, who along with her daughters has been granted leave to remain in Canada pending the outcome of her challenge, says she has received legal advice saying she would not have a strong refugee claim in the U.S. and is fearful of being deported back to El Salvador.

She is being represented by a public interest clinic for low-income clients operated by the University of Toronto's faculty of law. The federal government sought to contest the

participation of the other three applicants, but their role was ultimately upheld by a judge in December 2017 on national public interest grounds. They are relying on volunteer time and donations to cover their costs.

In its response, the government is asking the Federal Court to dismiss the case, arguing the woman did not try to seek refugee protection in the U.S., where she would have had multiple legal avenues for appeal. The government also refutes the assertion the agreement violates the charter.

A three-day hearing has been scheduled to take place in Toronto beginning next Jan. 21.

Trudeau Suggests Ford Doesn't Fully Understand Canada's Refugee System

By Paola Loriggio

[CTV News \(CAN\)](#), July 5, 2018

TORONTO – Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's first official meeting with Ontario's newly elected premier started with a friendly handshake Thursday, but it was clear the two leaders were miles apart when it comes to Ottawa's handling of the recent surge in asylum seekers.

Moments before the meeting, Premier Doug Ford blamed the federal government's immigration policies for putting a strain on local and provincial resources, saying Trudeau's administration has encouraged people to cross into Canada illegally.

"This has resulted in a housing crisis and threats to the services that Ontario families depend on," Ford's office said in the statement. "This mess was 100 per cent the result of the federal government, and the federal government should foot 100 per cent of the bills."

The move drew swift backlash from the provincial Opposition and prompted the federal government to pledge ongoing efforts to alleviate the burden on provinces, while urging Ontario to participate in the process.

Emerging from the meeting alone, Trudeau suggested Ford may not fully understand Canada's international obligations when it comes to asylum seekers.

"I spent a little time explaining how the asylum-seeking system works and how our system is supposed to operate," he said.

"At the same time I agreed that it would be good for our officials to sit down and get clarity on how we can actually work together to ensure that we are holding true to our values but making sure that our immigration and refugee system is being applied in its integrity."

Lisa MacLeod, the provincial minister overseeing the immigration file, said Trudeau's comments were "disrespectful" and argued neither the province nor its municipalities should be on the hook for commitments made by the prime minister.

"(Trudeau) was the one who tweeted out that everyone was welcome here and as a result of that we've had thousands of people cross the border illegally and it's putting a strain on many of our public resources," she said.

"If he wants to welcome them in, that's fine, but he should make sure he's paying for them and compensating the municipalities as well as the provincial government."

The federal government recently pledged to give Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba \$50 million to help offset some of the costs incurred due to the influx of asylum seekers illegally crossing the Canada-U.S. border.

The provinces, however, have asked for much more support.

Quebec, which has seen the bulk of asylum seekers arrive this year, has said its costs are closer to \$146 million, though that tally includes projections for future expenses. The province is set to receive \$36 million from Ottawa.

Ontario has been promised \$11 million by the federal government but Toronto Mayor John Tory has said the city alone needs \$64 million to recoup costs. The number of refugees and asylum claimants using the city's shelter system went from 459 in 2016 to 3,209 as of last month, according to a city report.

Hundreds currently being housed in college dormitories will be forced out in early August as schools prepare for students to return, the report said.

"The City of Toronto has been clear that we need assistance to deal with unprecedented numbers of refugee claimants and asylum seekers. The province has made its initial position clear," Tory said in a statement Thursday.

"I will continue to urge the Canadian government to take immediate action and I am optimistic that the federal government will work with us to fulfil its responsibility to help cities deal with these families."

Federal Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen has said the money already allocated is meant to help address some of the immediate temporary housing needs in those provinces.

A spokesman for the minister said Thursday the department is committed to working with the provinces on this issue.

"Over the past year, we have also worked closely with Quebec to ensure that adequate resources are in place and that every action is taken to reduce the impacts on provincial social services. We are ready to recreate this model in Ontario, and we need the collaboration of the provincial government."

Ontario's former Liberal government signed an immigration agreement with Ottawa in November of last year.

Under the deal, Ontario agreed to resettle a share of refugees "recognizing the need for flexibility in responding to emerging humanitarian needs," while Ottawa agreed to take

into account the potential financial impact on the province and consider the need for additional supports.

With files from Shawn Jeffords

Germany Agrees Steps On Migration, No Camps Of Any Kind: SPD Leader

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Germany, Austria Set Talks With Italy To Shut Southern Migrant Route To Europe

By Francois Murphy

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

NATIONAL NEWS

Scandal-plagued EPA Administrator Pruitt Resigns

By Michael Biesecker, Zeke Miller And Ellen Knickmeyer

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt resigned Thursday amid ethics investigations of outsized security spending, first-class flights and a sweetheart condo lease.

With Pruitt's departure, President Donald Trump loses an administrator many conservatives regarded as one of the more effective members of his Cabinet. But Pruitt had also been dogged for months by scandals that spawned more than a dozen federal and congressional investigations.

Talking to reporters on Air Force One, Trump continued to praise his scandal-plagued EPA chief, saying there was "no final straw" and he had not asked for Pruitt's resignation.

"Scott is a terrific guy," Trump said. "He came to me and said I have such great confidence in the administration I don't want to be a distraction. ... He'll go and do great things and have a wonderful life, I hope."

In his resignation letter to Trump, obtained by The Associated Press, Pruitt expressed no regrets.

"It is extremely difficult for me to cease serving you in this role first because I count it a blessing to be serving you in any capacity, but also, because of the transformative work that is occurring," Pruitt wrote. "However, the unrelenting attacks on me personally, my family, are unprecedented and have taken a sizable toll on all of us."

Pruitt, a Republican, had appeared Wednesday at a White House picnic for Independence Day, wearing a red-

checked shirt and loafers with gold trim. Trump gave him and other officials a brief shout-out, offering no sign of any immediate change in his job.

EPA Deputy Administrator Andrew Wheeler, a former coal industry lobbyist, will take the helm as acting administrator starting Monday.

"I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda," Trump tweeted Thursday.

Pruitt's resignation came days after two of his closest advisers spoke to House oversight committee investigators and revealed new, embarrassing details in ethics scandals involving Pruitt.

Samantha Dravis, who recently resigned as Pruitt's policy chief, told investigators last week that Pruitt had made clear to her before and after he became EPA administrator that he would like the attorney general's job, held then and now by Jeff Sessions.

Pruitt "had hinted at that (sic) some sort of conversation had taken place between he and the president," Dravis told congressional investigators, according to a transcript obtained Thursday by the AP. "That was the position he was originally interested in."

A former Oklahoma attorney general close to the oil and gas industry, Pruitt had filed more than a dozen lawsuits against the agency he was picked to lead. Arriving in Washington, he worked relentlessly to dismantle Obama-era environmental regulations that aimed to reduce toxic pollution and planet-warming carbon emissions.

During his one-year tenure, Pruitt crisscrossed the country at taxpayer expense to speak with industry groups and hobnob with GOP donors, but he showed little interest in listening to advocates he derided as "the environmental left." Those groups quickly applauded his departure.

"Despite his brief tenure, Pruitt was the worst EPA chief in history," said Kieran Suckling, executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity. "His corruption was his downfall, but his pro-polluter policies will have our kids breathing dirtier air long after his many scandals are forgotten."

Like Trump, Pruitt voiced skepticism about mainstream climate science and was a fierce critic of the Paris climate agreement. The president cheered his EPA chief's moves to boost fossil fuel production and roll back regulations opposed by corporate interests.

But despite boasts of slashing red tape and promoting job creation, Pruitt had a mixed record of producing real-world results. Many of the EPA regulations Pruitt scraped or delayed had not yet taken effect, and the tens of thousands of lost coal mining jobs the president pledged to bring back never materialized.

Pruitt was forced out following a series of revelations involving pricey trips with first-class airline seats and unusual security spending, including a \$43,000 soundproof booth for

making private phone calls. He also demanded 24-hour-a-day protection from armed officers, resulting in a swollen 20-member security detail that blew through overtime budgets and racked up expenses of more than \$3 million.

Pruitt routinely ordered his EPA staff to do personal chores for him, including picking up his dry cleaning and trying to obtain a used Trump hotel mattress for his apartment. He had also enlisted his staff to contact conservative groups and companies to find a lucrative job for his unemployed wife, including emails seeking a Chick-fil-A franchise from a senior executive at the fast-food chain.

Pruitt's job had been in jeopardy since the end of March, when ABC News first reported that he leased a Capitol Hill condo last year for just \$50 a night. It was co-owned by the wife of a veteran fossil fuels lobbyist whose firm had sought regulatory rollbacks from EPA.

Both Pruitt and the lobbyist, Steven Hart, denied he had conducted any recent business with EPA. But Hart was later forced to admit he had met with Pruitt at EPA headquarters last summer after his firm, Williams & Jensen, revealed he had lobbied the agency on a required federal disclosure form.

Pruitt also publicly denied any knowledge of massive raises awarded to two close aides he had brought with him to EPA from Oklahoma. Documents later showed Pruitt's chief of staff had signed off on the pay hikes, indicating he had the administrator's consent.

The slew of damaging revelations, many of which came to light through media reports and public records lawsuits filed by environmental groups, triggered more than a dozen investigations related to Pruitt's conduct by EPA's Office of Inspector General, the House Oversight Committee and other federal watchdogs.

It was not immediately clear how Pruitt's resignation might affect those ongoing probes. No longer a federal employee, Pruitt can't be compelled to speak or otherwise cooperate with the inspector general's investigation. As a private citizen, he could still be subpoenaed to testify before Congress, but Republican-led committees have thus far shown little appetite in forcing him to do so.

Jennifer Kaplan, a spokeswoman for EPA Inspector General Arthur Elkins, said Thursday that the office was "assessing and evaluating" its ongoing audits and investigations in the wake of Pruitt's departure.

Sen. John Barrasso, the Republican chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and until Thursday a strong defender of Pruitt, said Trump made the right decision to accept the resignation.

"It has become increasingly challenging for the EPA to carry out its mission with the administrator under investigation," said Barrasso, who is from Wyoming.

Pruitt is the latest Trump Cabinet official to lose his job over ethics issues. Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin was fired in March amid questionable travel charges and a

growing rebellion in his agency about the privatization of medical care. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price was fired last year after it was disclosed he took costly charter flights instead of commercial planes.

"Mr. Pruitt's brazen abuse of his position for his own personal gain has been absolutely astounding, rivaled only by the silence of far too many in Congress and in the White House who allowed Mr. Pruitt's unethical, and, at times, possibly illegal behavior to go unchecked," said Democratic Sen. Tom Carper of Delaware, long a vocal critic of Pruitt's.

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E.P.A. Chief Scott Pruitt Resigns Under A Cloud Of Ethics Scandals

By Coral Davenport

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

Scott Pruitt, President Trump's administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, resigned after facing months of allegations over legal and ethical violations.

Mr. Trump announced the resignation in a tweet on Thursday in which he thanked Mr. Pruitt for an "outstanding job" and said the agency's deputy, Andrew Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist, would take over as the acting administrator on Monday. In his resignation letter, Mr. Pruitt cited "unrelenting attacks on me personally" as one of the reasons for his departure, an apparent reference to the numerous investigations into his stewardship of the agency.

Mr. Pruitt had been hailed as a hero among conservatives for his zealous deregulation, but he could not overcome a spate of ethics questions about his alleged spending abuses, first-class travel and cozy relationships with lobbyists. Earlier on Thursday, The New York Times reported on new questions about whether aides to Mr. Pruitt had deleted sensitive information about his meetings from his public schedule, potentially in violation of the law.

Mr. Pruitt also came under fire for enlisting aides to obtain special favors for him and his family, such as reaching out to the chief executive of Chick-fil-A, Dan T. Cathy, with the intent of helping Mr. Pruitt's wife, Marlyn, open a franchise of the restaurant.

Mr. Pruitt, a former Oklahoma attorney general who built his career on lawsuits against the agency he would eventually lead, remained a favorite of Mr. Trump's for the majority of his tenure at the E.P.A. He began the largest regulatory rollback in the agency's history, undoing, delaying or blocking several Obama-era environmental rules. Among them was a suite of historic regulations aimed at mitigating global warming pollution from the United States' vehicles and power plants.

Mr. Pruitt also played a lead role in urging Mr. Trump to follow through on his campaign pledge to withdraw the United States from the 2015 Paris climate agreement, despite warnings from some of the president's other senior advisers that the move could damage the United States' credibility in foreign policy. Under the landmark accord, nearly every country had committed to reducing emissions of planet-warming fossil fuel pollution.

In 2017, Mr. Pruitt made headlines for questioning the established science of human-caused climate change, contradicting decades of research by scientific institutions, including his own agency. Although Mr. Pruitt was harshly criticized for the remarks, they did not affect his good standing with a president who has also mocked climate science.

Mr. Trump has repeatedly told associates that Mr. Pruitt has done what he has wanted in terms of cutting regulations, so he has been reluctant to let him go. Mr. Pruitt has made himself available to the president as a confidant as well as a possible next attorney general.

But White House advisers for months have implored Mr. Trump to get rid of Mr. Pruitt, including his chief of staff, John F. Kelly. Ultimately, the president grew disillusioned with Mr. Pruitt after a cascade of accusations of impropriety and ethical missteps overshadowed Mr. Pruitt's policy achievements.

In recent days, people who have spoken with Mr. Trump said he sounds exasperated with his EPA administrator's negative headlines. "It's one thing after another with this guy," one person close to Mr. Trump quoted the president as saying.

Mr. Pruitt is the subject of at least 13 federal investigations, and a government watchdog agency concluded that he had broken the law with his purchase of a \$43,000 secure telephone booth. He was also under investigation for his 2017 lease of a bedroom in a condominium linked to a Canadian energy company's powerful Washington lobbying firm, and for accusations that he demoted or sidelined E.P.A. employees who questioned his actions.

The former E.P.A. administrator had come under criticism for lavish expenditures on foreign travel, including a trip arranged for him by a lobbyist to Morocco, a country where the E.P.A. has no policy agenda. His domestic travel also came under fire after a former staff member told congressional investigators that his boss often sought to travel to Oklahoma, where Mr. Pruitt owns a home, directing his employees to "find me something to do" there so he could justify charging taxpayers for the expense.

Since President Trump's inauguration, staffers of the White House and federal agencies have left in firings and resignations, one after the other.

A New York Times report detailed Mr. Pruitt's lavish spending and questionable practices in his home state.

While Democrats have criticized Mr. Pruitt since his nomination, in recent months even conservative Republicans had taken the unusual step of criticizing and questioning his ethics. Representative Trey Gowdy, Republican of South Carolina and the chairman of the House Oversight Committee, has started an investigation into Mr. Pruitt's actions at the E.P.A., the first such Republican-led inquiry into a Trump administration cabinet member.

On May 2, Mr. Gowdy's staff began conducting transcribed, behind-closed-doors interviews with Mr. Pruitt's closest aides. Partial transcripts from one of those interviews revealed that Mr. Pruitt used one of his top aides last year essentially as a personal assistant, having her help him search for an apartment as well as try to procure a used mattress from the Trump International Hotel.

In addition, Mr. Pruitt faced irritation from the White House after The Atlantic magazine reported that Mr. Pruitt's office gave raises to two aides, even though the White House had declined to approve the raises.

The E.P.A. has denied any wrongdoing on Mr. Pruitt's behalf. But in May, several members of his senior staff resigned, and many more top employees are said to be considering leaving.

It remains unclear how well some aspects of Mr. Pruitt's regulatory rollback agenda, and his effort to undo the environmental work of his predecessors, will stand the test of time. In his haste to cripple government regulation and publicize his success, Mr. Pruitt and his officials have failed to follow important procedures, and courts have already struck down at least six of his rollback efforts.

His removal will deal a blow to his political aspirations. People close to Mr. Pruitt have said that he had been using his prominence in the Trump administration to position himself for a run for state office in Oklahoma. His sights, some said, were set on a possible presidential run in 2024.

Instead, Mr. Pruitt is now the latest in Mr. Trump's purge of top administration officials.

Scott Pruitt Steps Down As EPA Head After Ethics, Management Scandals

By Brady Dennis And Juliet Eilperin

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

Scott Pruitt, the former Oklahoma attorney general who relentlessly pursued President Trump's promises of deregulation at the Environmental Protection Agency, resigned Thursday after a cascade of controversies over his lavish spending, ethical lapses and controversial management decisions finally eroded the president's confidence in one of his most ardent Cabinet members.

Pruitt's reputation as a dogged deregulator and outspoken booster of the president allowed him to weather a litany of ethics scandals in recent months, including questions about taxpayer-funded first-class travel, a discounted condo rental from a D.C. lobbyist and the installation of a \$43,000 soundproof phone booth in his office.

But revelations about his behavior continued to mount, including reports that he repeatedly enlisted subordinates to help him search for housing, book personal travel and even help search for a six-figure job for his wife. That quest included setting up a call with Chick-fil-A executives, in which he discussed her becoming a franchisee, as well as outreach to a conservative judicial group that eventually hired Marlyn Pruitt.

In recent weeks, an exodus of trusted staffers left Pruitt increasingly isolated, and some once-loyal Republican lawmakers wearied of defending him. Investigators on Capitol Hill had summoned current and former EPA aides for questioning, as part of the more than dozen federal inquiries into Pruitt's spending and management of the agency.

On Thursday, President Trump called Pruitt's top deputy, Andrew Wheeler, to inform him that he would be taking the helm of the agency, according to an individual who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Soon after, Trump announced in a two-part tweet that he had accepted Pruitt's resignation. "Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this," Trump wrote.

White House chief of staff John F. Kelly, who traveled with Trump to a political rally in Montana on Thursday, had for months privately groused about Pruitt's conduct and pushed for his removal during West Wing meetings, according to White House officials who were not authorized to speak publicly. But the timing of Thursday's move took even some White House officials by surprise, as the president had closely guarded the decision.

In a resignation letter released by the EPA, Pruitt wrote that it had been "a blessing" to serve under Trump and undertake "transformative work at EPA. But he added that "the unrelenting attacks on me personally, my family, are unprecedented and have taken a sizable toll on all of us."

He signed the letter, "Your Faithful Friend, Scott Pruitt."

Wheeler, a former Senate staffer and EPA employee who spent the past decade representing coal, mining and other energy companies, will become acting administrator on Monday, Trump tweeted.

The departure marked a precipitous fall for Pruitt, who during his roughly 16 months in office took steps to reverse more than a dozen major Obama-era regulations and overhauled key elements of the agency's approach to scientific research. For months he had ranked as a personal confidant and influential policy adviser to the president,

commiserating with Trump over negative stories and indiscreet aides while praising the commander in chief for his intelligence and political acumen.

As scrutiny of Pruitt grew in recent months, Trump initially stood by his EPA chief. The president tweeted in early April that he was "doing a great job," despite revelations about a \$50-a-night condo rental from a lobbyist, large raises for top aides and dozens of first-class flights and costly travel funded by taxpayers. Trump publicly defended Pruitt and praised his job performance as recently as early June.

Pruitt also endured a series of contentious hearings recently on Capitol Hill, admitting little culpability as lawmakers in both parties grilled him about his ethics and spending decisions.

But the EPA leader continued to be dogged by bad publicity, with a litany of alleged spending excesses that current and former aides shared with congressional lawmakers. The Government Accountability Office found that he violated spending laws by installing a \$43,000 soundproof phone booth in his office — one of the more than a dozen federal inquiries launched into his management and expenditures.

The Washington Post reported that a lobbyist had helped arrange Pruitt's \$100,000 trip last December to Morocco, only to later receive a \$40,000-a-month contract to promote that country's interests.

Documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act showed the same sort of pattern for a visit the administrator wanted to make to Australia. That travel was canceled at the last minute, as was a trip to Israel, which had been lined up in part by casino magnate and Republican megadonor Sheldon Adelson.

Those same documents contained emails that showed Pruitt used his official position to line up a call with an executive at Atlanta-based Chick-fil-A, during which he raised the prospect of his wife getting a coveted franchise.

Combative and unapologetic, Pruitt spoke with the rapid-fire delivery of a trial lawyer when outlining his policy positions or addressing audiences. While serving as Oklahoma's attorney general, he made a name for himself in conservative circles by suing the EPA 14 times. And after taking over the EPA, he spent the bulk of his time meeting privately with industry leaders regulated by his agency, including top executives from the fossil fuel, agriculture and chemical sectors.

In the early months of the Trump administration, when other Cabinet members were struggling to recruit deputies and navigate their departments, Pruitt was already unraveling federal restrictions on greenhouse-gas emissions and toxic waste discharge from coal-fired power plants. He declined to ban a commonly used pesticide linked to potential neurological brain damage in fetuses, as the agency had previously proposed.

Most prominently, he pushed Trump to announce a U.S. withdrawal from the landmark Paris climate accord. He not only questioned the science of climate change but also the overwhelming scientific consensus that human activity is the primary contributor to global warming.

The moves, coupled with Pruitt's penchant for secrecy, made him a lightning rod for controversy. He refused to release his schedule in advance or transcripts of his speeches to industry groups. He installed biometric locks on doors and constructed the soundproof phone booth steps from his office.

From his third-floor, wood-paneled suite, Pruitt largely insulated himself from career staff, many of whom had worked to craft the policies he sought to dismantle. Meanwhile, through buyouts and a hiring freeze, he proudly shrank the EPA's workforce to levels not seen since the 1980s.

Pruitt unrelentingly steered the agency in the direction long sought by those being regulated, a shift he defended as providing regulatory certainty, handing greater power to states and saving companies money in compliance costs.

Critics described his approach as nothing short of an assault on the agency's mission, its employees and on science. Supporters applauded his willingness to wrangle an agency many conservatives view as prone to overreach and, as Pruitt recently said, "a bastion of liberalism."

The administrator's fervor and stamina elevated his profile significantly. At one point, Pruitt was viewed as a contender for attorney general if the president decided to fire Jeff Sessions, and he spoke privately with others about climbing the ranks of Trump's Cabinet.

Pruitt, who had considered running for Oklahoma governor before joining the administration, made a point of meeting with GOP activists and addressing large organizations that could help further any future political ambitions. He delivered the keynote speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference's annual gathering in February, a slot often reserved for presidential contenders.

When asked at CPAC what stood out as his proudest moment as head of the EPA, he cited Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate agreement — a decision that represented a win for Pruitt over Trump's own daughter and son-in-law, Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner.

"The president showed tremendous fortitude, tremendous courage to stand in the Rose Garden in June and say, 'You know what. I'm going to put America first,' " Pruitt told the audience.

In recent months, however, Pruitt's favor and credibility within the administration began to unravel. Even as he continued to announce far-reaching actions to scrap or scale back regulations, scrutiny over his ethical decisions and profligate spending began to overshadow his actual policies.

In February, The Washington Post detailed how Pruitt had routinely flown first-class and stayed in high-end hotels on dozens of trips during his first year, racking up hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer-funded expenses. While the EPA said such travel arrangements were necessary given the elevated number of threats to Pruitt's security, the revelations led to a wave of criticism about his spending and inquiries from lawmakers and government investigators.

Further allegations of ethical misconduct soon followed.

First came news about a discount rental agreement Pruitt arranged in 2017 with the wife of an energy and transportation lobbyist. It allowed him to pay \$50 a night only on the nights he used her Capitol Hill condo apartment.

Then came news that the EPA leader's office had circumvented the White House and used an obscure provision in the Safe Drinking Water Act to give large pay increases last month to two top aides, staffers who had come with him from Oklahoma. In an interview in early April with Fox News, Pruitt claimed to have "corrected" the decision and said he was not aware of the raises beforehand. Three administration officials subsequently confirmed that Pruitt had indeed endorsed the raises, though other staff members had overseen the paperwork.

The drumbeat of accusations quickened: That the EPA once considered a roughly \$100,000-a-month contract to lease Pruitt a private jet. That Pruitt's director of scheduling was also house-hunting for him on the side. That after leaving his Capitol Hill rental last summer, he ran the EPA from Oklahoma for a month. That he wanted his security detail to use emergency lights and sirens to get him around Washington faster, including to dinner at a favorite French restaurant. That he had upgraded to a larger, customized — and more expensive — SUV than his predecessor. That he had reassigned or dismissed a handful of senior employees who questioned his spending on travel, furnishings and more.

Internally, Pruitt's inner circle fractured between aides he had recruited from his Oklahoma days and conservatives who had worked in Washington for years and fought unsuccessfully to contain the administrator's spending excesses.

As the headlines piled up — prompting Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.) to tweet that Pruitt's "corruption scandals are an embarrassment to the Administration" — top aides strategized about how to protect their boss's job. Industry allies rallied to his side.

Several congressional Republicans, as well as some governors, conservative groups and pundits, defended the embattled EPA chief. Sens. Rand Paul of Kentucky and Ted Cruz of Texas both publicly backed Pruitt, as did governors Matt Bevin (Ky.), Phil Bryant (Miss.) and Pete Ricketts (Neb.). Bevin tweeted that the administrator should "ignore the nattering nabobs of negativism," invoking a phrase Vice

President Spiro T. Agnew used in 1969 while blasting the media.

But as weeks passed and more allegations mounted, at least half a dozen of Pruitt's closest aides, including several that came with him from Oklahoma, left the agency. His support on Capitol Hill eroded, and even few industry representatives rushed to his defense.

Just as he has with a few other Cabinet members he eventually dismissed, Trump at first stuck up for Pruitt. "He's been very courageous," the president told reporters April 5 on a flight back from West Virginia. "I can tell you at EPA he's done a fantastic job."

On June 6, he again praised Pruitt during a meeting at FEMA headquarters. "EPA is doing really, really well. And, you know, somebody has to say that about you a little bit. You know that, Scott," he said as Pruitt looked on. "People are really impressed with the job that's being done at the EPA."

But less than a month later, the president decided his most controversial Cabinet member must go. On the night before offering his resignation, Pruitt had worn a checkered red shirt to a gathering for military families on the White House lawn, as fireworks exploded over the nation's capital.

Josh Dawsey and Robert Costa contributed to this report.

Under Fire For Ethics Scandals, EPA Chief Pruitt Resigns

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Trump EPA Chief Scott Pruitt Resigns As Ethical Scandals Mount

By Ledyard King

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has resigned, President Donald Trump announced Thursday, ending a tenure marked by allegations of misconduct.

Deputy EPA lead Andrew Wheeler will replace Pruitt, Trump tweeted.

"Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this," Trump said, not mentioning the scandals that befell Pruitt.

Pruitt and his allies including Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, claimed he was the target of a leftwing conspiracy to get rid of him because of his aggressive efforts to undo Obama-era rules. By shedding Pruitt, the president has lost his most ardent and effective deregulator.

But even the president, who has frequently praised the agency's work under Pruitt, came to the conclusion that the former Oklahoma attorney general's professional achievements were not worth the steady media drip of Pruitt's personal peccadilloes.

Those issues became an avalanche, though Trump had in recent weeks has remained supportive of Pruitt. He did appear to be irritated by the constant drumbeat of stories outlining questionable personal conduct of his embattled cabinet member.

"I'm not happy about certain things," Trump told reporters June 15. "But he's done a fantastic job running the EPA, which is very overriding."

Trump and aides had expressed concern about Pruitt's behavior – "bothersome," one spokesman said this week – but had not publicly moved to dismiss him until Thursday, a day after Pruitt and other Cabinet members attended a July Fourth picnic at the White House.

Earlier in the year, Trump praised Pruitt in public and believed he was being targeted by political enemies; but he has been much more reticent in recent weeks.

But the president's endorsement didn't stop some Republicans in Congress from joining the Pruitt-must-go chorus. About 170 Democrats on Capitol Hill had called for his ouster and several prominent Republicans said it might be time for a change. He's currently facing more than a dozen federal investigations examining his conduct and ethics.

Pruitt's departure sets up a potentially bruising confirmation battle in the Senate with whomever Trump nominates as the next EPA administrator. Long list of ethical concerns

Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, who is unhappy with Pruitt's moves to reduce ethanol consumption that is economically important to Midwestern states, recently called the EPA administrator "as swampy as you can get."

Among the recent ethical challenges and criticisms:

Aides running errands

A top assistant to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt conducted personal errands for her boss last year, including booking personal flights, hunting for homes and inquiring about the availability of a used mattress from Trump International Hotel.

The errands performed by aide Millan Hupp were revealed as part of testimony she provided in May to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Huge raises for aides

As scrutiny mounted over his first-class flights, top aides getting huge pay raises after the White House rejected them, and the cozy rental arrangement he had with a lobbyist who is also a personal friend.

Pruitt paid \$50 a night to rent a room on Capitol Hill in an apartment owned by health care lobbyist Vicki Hart, who is married to energy lobbyist J. Steven Hart. He used it

beginning in February 2017 when he became EPA administrator and paid only on the nights he stayed until he moved out in July of that year.

EPA's senior ethics official, Kevin Minoli, recently reviewed the lease — months after he had vacated the apartment — and deemed that the arrangement did not violate agency rules. That was not enough for the White House which launched its own investigation.

Pruitt went on Fox News that day to defend his conduct, unapologetically calling his arrangement similar to an "Airbnb situation" where lodgers only pay for the nights they stay, and countering the criticism that renting from a energy lobbyist is a potential conflict.

Asking Trump to fire Sessions

Pruitt apparently asked that the president fire Attorney General Jeff Sessions and instead appoint him to run the Justice Department, according to a report by CNN.

He made the request during an Oval Office meeting with Trump in spring, CNN reported, citing three anonymous sources. Advisors shot down the idea but Trump has floated the option as recently as April.

Their meeting and the bold request came amid multiple federal reviews of Pruitt and continued criticism of his ethics and policy.

Secret calendar

A former staffer opened up about Pruitt's office and its method of scrubbing unflattering meetings from his official calendar.

Kevin Chmielewski, Pruitt's former deputy chief of staff for operations, told CNN that Pruitt kept secret calendars and schedules that included meetings with executives and one in 2017 with Cardinal George Pell, who later was charged with sexual assault.

"We would have meetings what we were going to take off on the official schedule. We had at one point three different schedules. One of them was one that no one else saw except three or four of us," Chmielewski told CNN.

The manner of deleting records and hiding official documents could be a violation of federal laws.

Pruitt had faced increasing public criticism and ethics reviews in recent months as expenses over security measures, first-class flights and a sound-proof communications system came to light.

The Atlantic reported the EPA chief bypassed the White House to give large raises to favored aides who had come with him from Oklahoma, where he was attorney general.

Despite the drumbeat of unfavorable publicity concerning Pruitt's personal conduct, Trump admired the job EPA was doing taking apart environmental regulations. During a March 29 speech in Ohio to tout his infrastructure initiative, the president praised the agency for moving to speed up environmental reviews of large projects.

"We've really streamlined the system; where we have really made it possible for people to get things done," Trump told the crowd of union laborers in Richfield, Ohio. "So many projects are under construction right now that would never, ever in a million years have gotten built." Picked to reshape EPA

It was clear when Trump picked Pruitt that he wanted someone who would not only dismantle Obama-era environmental initiatives but reshape the culture of an agency hard-line Republicans have long slammed as a political instrument to carry out a leftist agenda that impedes economic growth.

As Oklahoma's attorney general, Pruitt had sued the agency 14 times on behalf of the state challenging a variety of regulations and billing himself as "a leading activist against EPA's activist agenda."

A month after he took the helm in February, 2017, the budget released by President Trump, an ardent EPA critic himself, proposed gutting the \$8.2 billion agency by nearly a third. Congress ended up restoring most of the cuts.

Pruitt was opposed loudly by hundreds of former EPA employees, and more quietly by some current ones. They feared he would assist the petrochemical industry he grew close to in Oklahoma while ignoring the carefully constructed science that served as the foundation of many public health protections.

Subsequent cuts in pollution enforcement and the departure of hundreds of veteran EPA staffers through a buyout program have given environmental groups more reason to worry.

During Pruitt's 14 months at the helm, he began rolling back the Clean Power Plan targeting carbon emissions from energy plants and delayed implementation of the Waters of the U.S. rule aimed at improving water quality.

He announced the agency would undo the Obama administration's proposed reduction in auto emissions for cars and light trucks first set in motion in 2012 as part of its campaign to reduce greenhouse levels that contribute to climate change. Industry voices and other critics contend the changes, spurred by tough limits imposed by California, would drive up costs for consumers.

But there were subtler changes as well that struck at the core of the EPA's mission as defined by previous administrations.

The agency did away with the "sue-and-settle" approach that Pruitt said improperly allowed the Obama administration to circumvent laws by rewriting regulations behind closed doors with friendly environmental groups who filed lawsuits.

The agency also rewrote membership rules for the agency's advisory boards, so that both industry advocates and academics from Midwestern and Mountain states —

which Pruitt said were under-represented — have greater influence when counseling agency leaders on new rules.

Scott Pruitt Resigns; Trump: ‘Scott Has Done An Outstanding Job’

By Saagar Enjeti

[Daily Caller](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump accepted the resignation of Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt Thursday, with his deputy Andrew Wheeler taking over for the agency.

Pruitt has been embroiled in a series of scandals regarding his tenure at the EPA including his misuse of office to benefit himself personally, mistreating staff, and a host of embarrassing stories about his personal conduct which have besieged the administration.

Pruitt survived the litany of scandals for so long because of his close relationship with Trump who was pleased with the job he was doing at the EPA. The outgoing administrator undid several Obama administration regulations which the president believes is responsible for much of the economic growth seen during his administration.

Trump Accepts EPA Chief's Resignation: Pruitt Did ‘Outstanding Job’ Shaping Deregulation Agenda

By Cameron Cawthorne

[Washington Free Beacon](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump on Thursday accepted the resignation of Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, who has been under scrutiny for multiple ethics scandals.

Trump made the announcement on Twitter, praising Pruitt for doing an “outstanding job” and saying he will “always be thankful” for the EPA chief’s role in helping shape the administration’s EPA agenda.

“I have accepted the resignation of Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this. The Senate confirmed Deputy at EPA, Andrew Wheeler, will...” Trump tweeted.

I have accepted the resignation of Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this. The Senate confirmed Deputy at EPA, Andrew Wheeler, will...

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

“...on Monday assume duties as the acting Administrator of the EPA. I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda. We have made tremendous progress and the future of the EPA is very bright!” Trump wrote.

...on Monday assume duties as the acting Administrator of the EPA. I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda. We have made tremendous progress and the future of the EPA is very bright!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

While Pruitt has been hailed by Trump and conservatives for his deregulation at the EPA, he has come under scrutiny in recent months for several ethics scandals, including cozy spending abuses and traveling first class, according to the New York Times.

Mr. Pruitt is the subject of at least 13 federal investigations, and a government watchdog agency concluded that he had broken the law with his purchase of a \$43,000 secure telephone booth. He was also under investigation for his 2017 lease of a bedroom in a condominium linked to a Canadian energy company’s powerful Washington lobbying firm, and for accusations that he demoted or sidelined E.P.A. employees who questioned his actions.

The former E.P.A. administrator had come under criticism for lavish expenditures on foreign travel, including a trip arranged for him by a lobbyist to Morocco, a country where the E.P.A. has no policy agenda. His domestic travel also came under fire after a former staff member told congressional investigators that his boss often sought to travel to Oklahoma, where Mr. Pruitt owns a home, directing his employees to “find me something to do” there so he could justify charging taxpayers for the expense.

In his resignation letter, Pruitt said the decision to resign was a difficult one for multiple reasons but that the “unrelenting attacks” on him and his family made it necessary.

“Thank you again Mr. President for the honor of serving you and I wish you Godspeed in all that you put your hand to,” Pruitt said.

Andrew Wheeler, the current deputy administrator at the EPA, will assume the duties as acting EPA administrator on Monday.

EPA Chief Scott Pruitt Resigns Amid Crush Of Scandals

By Jennifer A Dlouhy

[Bloomberg News](#), July 5, 2018

Scott Pruitt has resigned as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency after a deluge of damaging revelations about his spending, travel and a condo rental that prompted Republican lawmakers to distance themselves and question his continued effectiveness.

President Donald Trump announced in a tweet on Thursday that he had accepted the resignation. “Within the

Agency Scott has done an outstanding job and I will always be thankful to him for this,” Trump said.

It is a dramatic turn of fortune for Pruitt, who was celebrated by conservatives for zealously attacking the EPA as Oklahoma’s attorney general. Once he got to Washington, he acquired a national profile for methodically moving to dismantle Obama administration regulations on climate change and air pollution.

A former coal lobbyist, Andrew Wheeler, will take over the agency as acting administrator on Monday, Trump said. Wheeler was confirmed as the EPA’s No. 2 official in April. Unlike Pruitt, Wheeler has a low-key approach, cultivated during years working in Washington – including a previous turn at the EPA and time on Capitol Hill serving under Senator James Inhofe, an Oklahoma Republican.

Pruitt’s departure is a victory for environmentalists and good government advocates who have campaigned against the EPA administrator’s conduct since his confirmation in February 2017. They cast him as an unabashed ally of corporate polluters and assailed what they called his ethical abuses.

At least 170 Democrats and four Republicans in the House and Senate had sought Pruitt’s ouster amid allegations of ethical missteps and abuses of power, including his decision to rent a bedroom in a Capitol Hill condominium from a lobbyist for \$50 a night under unusually generous terms.

Pruitt, 50, also drew fire – and at least a dozen formal investigations – for frequent travel to his home state of Oklahoma, questionable spending decisions at the EPA, raises for two top aides and accusations some employees were sidelined after challenging the administrator’s decisions.

Recent disclosures also revealed the extent to which Pruitt enlisted aides to conduct an array of personal errands, including helping him find housing in Washington, buying a second-hand mattress from the Trump International Hotel and pursuing a Chick-fil-A Inc. franchise for his wife. At least some of the work was conducted with EPA email and during working hours, potentially violating federal ethics rules that bar federal employees from using their public office for private gain and soliciting gifts from employees.

At least five political appointees, including three longtime Pruitt allies, left the agency as allegations mounted.

But the animosity Pruitt generated among liberal activists is matched by the fondness he inspired on the political right. For more than a year, that helped insulate him and gave him leverage within the White House – power he successfully used to help persuade Trump to pull the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement.

Trump stood by Pruitt for months. He defended his EPA chief in an April 7 tweet proclaiming that “Pruitt is doing a great job. The president reiterated his confidence in the administrator on May 11 and again on June 6, saying the

“EPA is doing really, really well” under Pruitt’s leadership. But by June 15, the president’s support had softened, with Trump saying he was “not happy” about some of Pruitt’s actions.

Some Republican lawmakers and business lobbyists questioned whether the steady stream of revelations was undermining Pruitt’s day-to-day work on intricate environmental policy and limiting his room to maneuver on sensitive issues.

Republican lawmakers on both sides of a contentious debate over the U.S. biofuel mandate seized on Pruitt’s problems as leverage to try and influence EPA policy decisions in June. And prominent conservatives pushed for Pruitt’s ouster, including commentator Laura Ingraham and the National Review, which said the administrator should be replaced amid reports of questionable behavior.

Pruitt defended himself against some of the allegations in congressional hearings in late April and early May, calling them “a distraction” promoted by critics who “want to attack and derail the president’s agenda.” After telling lawmakers that EPA career staff oversaw the acquisition of a \$43,000 soundproof phone booth, Pruitt issued a memo putting three political appointees in charge of approving any expenditures of more than \$5,000 on his behalf.

Congressional lawmakers also have been scrutinizing Pruitt’s reliance on first- and business-class airplane flights, a practice EPA officials have defended as necessary amid vulgar, aggressive encounters and escalating threats. In April, the Government Accountability Office concluded the EPA violated federal spending laws by failing to give Congress advance notification of the secure phone booth purchase.

Pruitt has been the one of the most enthusiastic crusaders in Trump’s campaign against regulations that the president said were throttling U.S. jobs. He has been the face of the Trump administration’s efforts to reduce regulatory burdens on businesses, shrink the federal government’s footprint and jettison Obama-era policies against climate change.

At the EPA, Pruitt began rewriting a host of rules, including a measure that critics said gave the federal government too much power to regulate waterways nationwide and the Clean Power Plan, former President Barack Obama’s signature plan for combating carbon dioxide emissions from electricity.

He also has led the rewrite of EPA policies to limit what scientific studies can be used to justify agency regulations, curb settlements with conservationists and relax a decades-old air pollution policy. Under Pruitt’s watch, the EPA also has decided to revise vehicle standards and delayed a rule to boost the safety of chemical facilities.

Pruitt said he was reorienting the agency toward its core mission, ensuring states played a significant role in environmental oversight and spurring the cleanup of toxic Superfund sites.

Scott Pruitt Out At EPA

By John Siciliano

[Washington Examiner](#), July 5, 2018

Scott Pruitt stepped down as head of the Environmental Protection Agency, after a series of controversies that overshadowed his year of leading President Trump's anti-regulation, pro-growth agenda.

"I have accepted the resignation of Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency," Trump tweeted Thursday. "Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this. The Senate confirmed Deputy at EPA, Andrew Wheeler, will on Monday assume duties as the acting Administrator of the EPA. I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda. We have made tremendous progress and the future of the EPA is very bright!"

I have accepted the resignation of Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this. The Senate confirmed Deputy at EPA, Andrew Wheeler, will...— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

...on Monday assume duties as the acting Administrator of the EPA. I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda. We have made tremendous progress and the future of the EPA is very bright!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

Pruitt had been under the microscope for months after a number of allegations. He was the subject of at least a dozen federal investigations, over issues including his \$50-per-night condo rental deal with the wife of an energy lobbyist who had business before the EPA, spending more than \$3 million on his 24-hour security detail, frequent first-class travel, reports he retaliated against employees who questioned his judgment, sending his staff on personal errands, and using them to try to find a job for his wife.

At least some of those actions were illegal.

The Government Accountability Office rule that the EPA broke federal law by spending \$43,000 on a secure phone booth for Pruitt's office without notifying Congress.

His ties to lobbyists were extensive. Lobbyists, or private individuals from outside government, helped plan Pruitt's controversial \$100,000 trip to Morocco, where he promoted natural gas, and were involved with preparing for canceled visits to Australia and Israel. Involving outsiders in travel plans proved to be problematic. Federal law prohibits public officials from using their office to enrich themselves or any private individual, or to offer endorsements.

Pruitt's problems eventually shook up his staff, bringing broader turmoil to the agency. Four top-level aides to Pruitt resigned during one week spanning late April to early May,

including his top two communications officials, Liz Bowman and John Konkus. Two more quit on the same day in June.

Two other employees quit under scrutiny: Albert "Kell" Kelly, a controversial figure who was barred from the banking industry and led the agency's Superfund program that helps clean up hazardous sites, and Pasquale "Nino" Perrotta, the head of Pruitt's security detail and a major figure and witness in federal probes of Pruitt's spending and ethics.

Pruitt, in testimony before two House committees in April, downplayed his role in the various problems at the agency, mostly blaming career and political staff who work under him. Pruitt's deflection of responsibility damaged morale among EPA staff, sources said, and inhibited the agency from pursuing Trump's policy agenda.

Trump had been reluctant to push Pruitt out, repeatedly praising him for advancing the president's "energy dominance agenda" and delivering for "coal and energy country."

For Trump, the EPA chief was a central figure in implementing the president's deregulation agenda, making some of Trump's earliest executive actions. Pruitt is central to rolling back former President Barack Obama's Climate Action Plan, which included national climate change regulations and the Paris climate change accord.

Pruitt also was trying to stop or prevent new regulations from taking effect that he argued would drive up costs for states, oil refiners, power plant operators, and oil and natural gas frackers. Pruitt in April announced that he would reject Obama-era regulations that set strict fuel-efficiency standards for cars and light-truck and went further than many automakers had asked for in weakening them.

Pruitt came into office promising to transform the agency's focus away from climate change, and return it "back to the basics" of cleaning up air, water and land.

He has done so by routinely questioning manmade climate change, booting scientists from key advisory boards, and promoting the coal and natural gas industries, all to the chagrin of critics who say he works too closely with the fossil fuel industry that the EPA is supposed to regulate.

Nevertheless, Pruitt has aimed to clean up hazardous Superfund sites faster than his predecessors, while declaring a "war on lead" in drinking water to overcome lingering problems after the 2014 Flint, Mich., water crisis.

But critics say Pruitt has little to show for those efforts and is more concerned about the publicity created from promising tough action. And by avoiding addressing what many see as today's major environmental challenge — climate change — critics say he is moving the agency backward.

Pruitt has said that the EPA has taken 22 actions to delay or weakened prior agency regulations, most from the Obama administration. He says the moves have saved taxpayers more than \$1 billion.

More prominently, he encouraged Trump to reject the Paris Agreement and has begun repealing and replacing the Clean Power Plan, Obama's core policy to force reductions in carbon emissions from power plants.

Pruitt's EPA, however, has suffered setbacks in the courts, and many of his rollbacks may go unrealized.

Liberal attorneys general have sued the Trump administration for actions including delaying the Waters of the United States rule, eliminating a rule to limit methane emissions, missing a deadline to implement standards for controlling smog-forming pollution, and suspending a requirement that states track on-road greenhouse gas emissions.

Some of the challenges have already been successful.

In July, a federal appeals court blocked the Trump administration from eliminating an EPA rule limiting methane emissions from oil and natural gas wells.

The effort by liberal attorneys general resembles a similar pushback by leading Republican state lawyers who coalesced to challenge the Obama administration's use of executive action on issues including energy and environment, immigration, and healthcare.

Indeed, Pruitt, as Oklahoma's attorney general, was a leader in that campaign, suing the EPA more than a dozen times, challenging the agency's authority to regulate toxic mercury pollution, smog, carbon emissions from power plants, and wetland and waterways.

The Democratic attorneys general, led by the top attorneys in California and New York, say the Trump administration has not followed proper legal procedures and laws to unwind regulations, and has failed to justify its actions with science-based facts.

The attorneys general, as plaintiffs in lawsuits, frequently accuse the Trump administration of flouting the Administrative Procedures Act, by short-circuiting the public comment process to delay implementation of Obama-era rules.

Embattled Pruitt Out As EPA Chief

By John T. Bennett

[CQ Roll Call \(DC\)](#), July 5, 2018

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is the latest Trump administration Cabinet official to be ousted or abruptly leave, after his resignation was accepted Thursday by President Donald Trump.

"Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this," the president tweeted.

Andrew Wheeler, who will become the acting administrator, previously worked for Republican Sen. James M. Inhofe of Oklahoma. Inhofe had defended Pruitt, a former Oklahoma attorney general, after meeting with him last month.

"I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda. We have made tremendous progress and the future of the EPA is very bright!" Trump said on Twitter.

Pruitt has been under fire in recent months over a series of controversies, drawing scorn from both Republicans and Democrats, including some GOP figures who have at times had Trump's ear..

He was confronted Tuesday by a 33-year-old sixth-grade teacher, who was holding her two-year-old son at Washington restaurant Teasm. She urged him to step down in a confrontation caught on video.

Earlier this week, reports surfaced of a former aide telling lawmakers that Pruitt made 20-something staffers book expensive hotel rooms and pay for them. He never paid them back.

Pruitt also raised eyebrows by allegedly ordering his aides to search for a used mattress from the Trump International Hotel near the White House.

Among other scandals, he had a questionable — and cheap — arrangement for lodging with the wife of an energy lobbyist, and pushed for massive pay increases for several staffers.

One Democratic member was quick and pithy when reacting to the resignation news. "It's about time," Ohio Rep. Tim Ryan said in a statement.

Another Democrat, Sen. Tom Carper of Delaware, said Pruitt's time running the agency "has been marked by blatant rejections of sound science, proposals to undermine our country's bedrock environmental protections and consistent efforts to personally profit off of public service."

"Since he was nominated for this position," Carper said in a statement, "I have made clear that Mr. Pruitt's long record made him the wrong person to lead the agency."

The Full Text Of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's Resignation Letter To President Trump

By William Cummings

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump said Thursday that Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt submitted his resignation letter and that after an "outstanding job" in the role, he had accepted the scandal-plagued Cabinet member's decision.

In the letter, Pruitt praises Trump's "courage, steadfastness and resolute commitment to get results for the American people." He said Trump is "serving as President today because of God's providence." Pruitt said he must leave the administration because "the unrelenting attacks on me personally, my family, are unprecedented and have taken a sizable toll on all of us."

Here is the full text of the letter:

Mr. President,

It has been an honor to serve you in the Cabinet as Administrator of the EPA. Truly, your confidence in me has blessed me personally and enabled me to advance your agenda beyond what anyone anticipated at the beginning of your Administration. Your courage, steadfastness and resolute commitment to get results for the American people, both with regard to improved environmental outcomes as well as historical regulatory reform, is in fact occurring at an unprecedented pace and I thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the American people in helping achieve those ends.

That is why it is hard for me to advise you I am stepping down as Administrator of the EPA effective as of July 6. It is extremely difficult for me to cease serving you in this role first because I count it a blessing to be serving you in any capacity, but also, because of the transformative work that is occurring. However, the unrelenting attacks on me personally, my family, are unprecedented and have taken a sizable toll on all of us.

My desire in service to you has always been to bless you as you make important decisions for the American people. I believe you are serving as President today because of God's providence. I believe that same providence brought me into your service. I pray as I have served you that I have blessed you and enabled you to effectively lead the American people. Thank you again Mr. President for the honor of serving you and I wish you Godspeed in all that you put your hand to.

Your Faithful Friend,
Scott Pruitt

Scott Pruitt Resigns As Head Of EPA

By Gabriella Muñoz

[Washington Times](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump accepted the resignation of Scott Pruitt as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday.

The president announced Mr. Pruitt's resignation on Twitter and said Andrew Wheeler will take over on Monday.

I have accepted the resignation of Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this. The Senate confirmed Deputy at EPA, Andrew Wheeler, will... — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

...on Monday assume duties as the acting Administrator of the EPA. I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda. We have made tremendous progress and the future of the EPA is very bright! — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 5, 2018

Mr. Pruitt's resignation is effective Friday.

"It is extremely difficult for me to cease serving you in this role first because I count it as a blessing to be serving you in any capacity, but also because of the transformative work that is occurring," he wrote in his resignation letter obtained by Fox News. "However the unrelenting attacks on me personally, my family, are unprecedented and have taken a sizable toll on all of us."

BREAKING: @EPAScottPruitt resignation letter to @realDonaldTrump. Obtained by @johnrobertsFox: pic.twitter.com/A3ErO84hLQ — Fin Gomez (@finnygo) July 5, 2018

Mr. Pruitt had been seen Wednesday at the White House celebrating Independence Day at an annual picnic for military families at the president's invitation.

He resigned after increasing scrutiny of his spending decisions and persistent questions about his ethics in the post.

"Wildlife should be dancing in the streets. Mr. Pruitt was bad for the environment and bad for wildlife. He will not be missed," Jamie Rappaport Clark, president and CEO of Defenders of Wildlife said.

On Tuesday, Mr. Pruitt was confronted at a D.C. restaurant by a mother with her young son. Kristin Mink, a schoolteacher, listed several critiques of his work at the EPA and then asked him to resign.

"I just wanted to urge you to resign because of what you're doing to the environment in our country," she said.

Embattled Scott Pruitt Resigns As EPA Administrator

His resignation comes amid allegations involving ethics, spending

By Louise Radnofsky

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Embattled EPA Chief Scott Pruitt Resigns Amid Scandals

By Evan Halper

[Los Angeles Times](#), July 5, 2018

Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt, one of the most scandal-plagued Cabinet officials in U.S. history, is leaving the agency, President Trump tweeted Thursday.

"I have accepted the resignation of Scott Pruitt as the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency," Trump said in a tweet. "Within the agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this."

He said Pruitt's deputy at EPA, Andrew Wheeler, will assume control on Monday as acting administrator.

"I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda," Trump wrote. "We have

made tremendous progress and the future of the EPA is very bright!"

The departure of the anti-regulatory crusader ends a bizarre and tumultuous chapter of the Trump administration that puzzled even some of the president's staunchest supporters.

The spendthrift EPA chief has been a political liability for the White House for months, drawing the attention of federal investigators with scandal after scandal, many of which were linked to his lavish spending of taxpayer money and the use of his position to enrich his family. Pruitt leaves the post the target of more than a dozen official probes.

The transgressions span from Pruitt's deal with the wife of a top energy lobbyist for deeply discounted housing, huge raises he gave friends against the instructions of the White House and his penchant for flying first class. Pruitt used his office to try to secure his wife a Chick-fil-A franchise and also enlisted aides to try to help her land lucrative work elsewhere. He had a \$43,000 phone booth installed in his office.

"Scott Pruitt's corruption and coziness with industry lobbyists finally caught up with him," said Erich Pica, president of Friends of the Earth, an environmental advocacy group. "We're happy that Pruitt can no longer deceive Americans or destroy our environment."

The executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington issued a one-word statement: "Good."

Though President Trump initially backed Pruitt and prominent conservatives had lobbied to keep him in place, the scandals eventually made Pruitt too much of a liability for the administration.

Pruitt has been seen by conservatives as among Trump's most effective Cabinet members, aggressively dismantling clean water and air rules, working from the inside to weaken the agency's authority and rolling back the Obama-era climate action loathed by fossil fuel companies.

The latest Cabinet shuffle reflects a remarkable turnabout for Pruitt, once a rising GOP star. The EPA position was seen by Pruitt's allies as a launchpad for bigger ambitions, such as a run for the Senate or Oklahoma governorship, and possibly even the presidency.

But that political future has been thrown into doubt amid investigations into behavior the White House was unwilling to defend, such as the unauthorized purchase of the soundproof phone booth meant to deter eavesdroppers.

The departure is a blow to anti-regulatory activists eager to see the rules of the Obama era scrapped. Several of the battles Pruitt launched against regulations, such as the aggressive fuel economy standards championed by California and the federal Clean Power Plan aimed at reducing electricity plant emissions, are likely to endure for years. The Trump administration already was sprinting to get the rules rewritten and through court challenges before the next presidential election.

The shake-up could slow that work and give environmental groups and the coalition of states fighting Pruitt's agenda an advantage.

Still, in his short time at the EPA, Pruitt managed to do more to undermine the environmental protection work of its career scientists, analysts and enforcement officers than any leader of the agency since the early days of the Reagan administration. And the appointment of former coal industry lobbyist Wheeler as acting head ensures the Pruitt agenda will endure. Former agency chiefs — including some who served GOP presidents — expressed alarm at Pruitt's climate denialism and his hostility toward many bedrock environmental rules.

"I have no doubt and complete confidence [Wheeler] will continue the important deregulatory work that Scott Pruitt started while being a good steward of the environment," said Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), adding Wheeler worked for him for 14 years.

Pruitt often was unabashedly at war with his own agency, alleging it was under the control of activist bureaucrats working in tandem with environmental groups to impose a radical agenda. When his ethics problems became insurmountable, he blamed his troubles on those same forces, accusing them of manufacturing controversy to thwart his deregulation push.

But concern about Pruitt's ethics issues ultimately reached the White House, where Trump advisors worried his spending habits and management undermined Trump's vow to "drain the swamp" of government waste and corruption. Iowa Republican Sen. Joni Ernst, a Trump ally, said in June that Pruitt "is about as swampy as you get."

The housing arrangement, which Pruitt likened to "an Airbnb situation," allowed him to stay in a condo a block from the Capitol for \$50 a night, paying only for nights he was in town — far below market rates for such a room.

Pruitt also helped two of his confidants secure giant pay raises against White House instructions. After getting turned down by the White House, the EPA granted the raises by invoking a provision of the Safe Drinking Water Act that allowed Pruitt to make up to 30 hires without White House or congressional approval. The salary of one of the aides was boosted to \$164,200 from \$107,435. The other saw a salary increase from \$86,460 to \$114,590.

As the housing and salary hike controversies emerged, Pruitt already was battling fallout from his tendency to fly first class for government travel, and also arranging his taxpayer-funded trips so he could spend weekends at his home in Oklahoma. Pruitt said security concerns demanded he fly in the luxury cabin, but it was a clear departure from the practice of past EPA leaders. A member of his security detail said flying in coach exposed him to angry members of the public.

Reports that Pruitt sidelined EPA staffers who objected to his requests for special treatment didn't help his case. The

Pruitt requests that caused staff to bristle, according to the New York Times, included the blaring of government vehicle sirens to cut through traffic on routine trips, his first-class plane trips and a security detail three times the size of that of his predecessors. There also was a request for a bulletproof vehicle with tires resistant to gunfire.

As Pruitt struggled to explain it all, more scandals kept emerging. Emails obtained by the Sierra Club revealed how Pruitt had his staff schedule a meeting with the CEO of Chick-fil-A, with the goal of landing his wife a franchise. Reports emerged that he tasked them with such things as acquiring a used mattress, tracking down the luxury skin lotion he prefers and using their personal credit cards to cover his hotel bills.

By July, it was clear that even some of Pruitt's most loyal aides would no longer protect him. They detailed for congressional investigators more of the agency chief's questionable conduct, including tasking aides with finding his wife a job. The White House communications staff had long since stopped defending Pruitt, and so had many conservatives.

Yet Trump continued tweeting his praise. Now, it seems, even the president has had enough of the turmoil Pruitt added to his administration.

Scott Pruitt Quits As EPA Chief Amid Ethics Controversies

By Bob Fredericks

[New York Post](#), July 5, 2018

Embattled EPA Chief Scott Pruitt resigned under mounting pressure on Thursday as the number of controversies — and congressional investigations — over his personal and professional behavior continued to pile up.

President Trump, who had been one of the Oklahoman's staunchest defenders, announced the resignation in a pair of tweets.

"I have accepted the resignation of Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this," he wrote.

"The Senate confirmed Deputy at EPA, Andrew Wheeler, will on Monday assume duties as the acting Administrator of the EPA. I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda. We have made tremendous progress and the future of the EPA is very bright!"

Critics were relieved, with Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington head Noah Bookbinder responding in a one-word statement.

"Good," he said.

Pruitt was overwhelmed by a series of controversies, including lavish spending on first-class air travel and an expanded, 24-hour security detail, a sweetheart rent deal on

a DC condo owned by a lobbyist with business before the EPA and a \$40,000 private phone booth in his office.

It was also revealed that he personally tried to get his wife a Chick-fil-A franchise as well as another high-paying job — and that he blew taxpayers' money on "tactical" pants normally worn by law enforcement.

Just this week, CNN reported that Pruitt's aides omitted his meeting with industry officials and lobbyists — which could have been politically embarrassing if revealed — from his publicly released schedules.

But despite bipartisan outrage, he remained a favorite of the president's — as evinced by his tweets — as he overturned numerous environmental rules issued by ex-President Obama.

He had denied wrongdoing in the face of 13 separate congressional and oversight inquiries.

In a fawning letter of resignation, Pruitt lavished praise on the commander in chief.

"It has been an honor to serve you in the cabinet," he wrote.

"Your confidence in me has blessed me personally and enabled me to enact your agenda," he said before saying he could no longer remain.

"It is extremely difficult for me to cease serving you in this role first because I count it a blessing to be serving you in any capacity, but also, because of the transformative work that is occurring," he continued.

"However, the unrelenting attacks on me personally [and] my family, are unprecedented and have taken a sizable toll on all of us," Pruitt added.

Pruitt's departure likely won't mean much for how the EPA conducts its business.

A former coal lobbyist, Wheeler shares Trump's love of undoing environmental protections and opening federal lands preserved under Obama to fossil-fuel exploration and other commercial uses.

Pruitt Resigns As EPA Chief

By Alex Guillén And Anthony Adragna

[Politico](#), July 5, 2018

EPA chief Scott Pruitt resigned on Thursday, finally bowing to a torrent of spending, travel, access and secrecy scandals that brought down one of the most aggressive enforcers of President Donald Trump's anti-regulation agenda.

Pruitt faced more than a dozen ongoing ethics probes from EPA's inspector general, the House Oversight Committee, the White House, the Government Accountability Office and the Oklahoma Bar Association. He faced scrutiny over everything from his lease of a Capitol Hill condo for \$50 a night from the wife of an energy lobbyist who simultaneously met with Pruitt about EPA business, his extensive use of first-class air travel and his extensive

connections and ties to the industries he regulates. (See a running summary of Pruitt's controversies [here](#).)

President Donald Trump announced Pruitt's exit, saying on Twitter "I have accepted the resignation of Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this."

Pruitt's deputy, Andrew Wheeler, will become acting administrator of the EPA. Wheeler is a former coal lobbyist with deep ties to Washington and is expected to pursue a similar deregulatory agenda.

Environmentalists were quick to take a victory lap over Pruitt's resignation.

"Scott Pruitt's corruption and coziness with industry lobbyists finally caught up with him," Erich Pica, president of Friends of the Earth, said in a statement. "This victory belongs to the hundreds of thousands of activists who fought to protect the Environmental Protection Agency from a corrupt crony set on destroying it from the inside."

Pruitt Drowns In The Swamp

The permanent green government takes out Trump's deregulator.

By The Editorial Board

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Scott Pruitt Removes His Ethical Swamp From EPA

By The Editorial Board, Usa Today

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

The only surprising things about the resignation of Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, announced Thursday, were that it took as long as it did and that he was allowed to resign.

As an astonishing number of scandals swirled around the EPA chief, the clamor for his departure came to resemble nothing more than the Dr. Seuss classic about a man named Marvin K. Mooney, with Pruitt substituting for the title character:

"The time has come. The time is now. Just go. Go GO! I don't care how. You can go by foot. You can go by cow. Edward Scott Pruitt, will you please go now!"

So Pruitt is finally and belatedly on his way out, after spawning more than a dozen investigations in fewer than 17 months on the job. These cover a sweetheart rental agreement with an energy lobbyist's wife, lavish spending of taxpayer money on security and first-class airfare, efforts to get his wife a Chick-fil-A franchise, using aides to do his private business, and other allegations too numerous to mention here.

How did Pruitt survive as long as he did? The short answer was the passion he displayed for doing President Donald Trump's bidding in rolling back environmental regulations.

For all of Trump's rhetoric about "draining the swamp" in Washington, he was reluctant to get rid of the biggest grifter in his own administration because, as the president put it Thursday, in his opinion Pruitt was doing "an outstanding job" within the agency.

In reality, the former Oklahoma attorney general leaves a disastrous policy legacy on top of his disastrous personal one. Pruitt, who questions the overwhelming scientific consensus that human activity is driving global warming, pushed Trump to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate accord.

That ill-considered decision leaves America as the odd country out among the world's nations, even as parts of the planet experience extreme, record-shattering heat.

Pruitt's top deputy, Andrew Wheeler, is set to become acting administrator on Monday. Wheeler, a former Senate aide, EPA staffer and energy lobbyist, is expected to continue implementing Pruitt's deregulatory agenda.

But, like Cal Ripken's streak of 2,632 consecutive baseball games, Pruitt's record for ethical entanglements by a single Cabinet member is going to be hard to top. It was, indeed, long past time for him to go. So ... he went.

Scott Pruitt Exits, Sticking You With The Tab

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

The editorial board represents the opinions of the board, its editor and the publisher. It is separate from the newsroom and the Op-Ed section.

Just when America had all but given up hope, Scott Pruitt's appalling reign as Environmental Protection Agency administrator is finally over. Thursday afternoon, Mr. Pruitt delivered President Trump his resignation letter, replete with references to "God's providence" and how "blessed" he was to have had the opportunity to serve not the nation, but this president. He sadly noted that "the unrelenting attacks on me personally, my family, are unprecedented and have taken a sizable toll on all of us." And so Mr. Pruitt heads for the door, leaving behind a dark, oily stain on the office that he has spent the past year and a half vigorously defiling.

Mr. Pruitt's departure did not come as a total shock. Word around Washington in recent weeks was that the stench of corruption wafting from E.P.A. headquarters was getting to be too much even for Mr. Trump. Someone in the White House no doubt noticed that, with the midterms approaching, Mr. Pruitt was not playing well with any voter who retains some common sense. In an administration characterized by extreme swampiness and ethical flexibility, the E.P.A. chief had nonetheless distinguished himself with

pathological grifting to the point that even some Republican lawmakers and reliably conservative commentators had begun publicly slapping him.

Still, for months, Mr. Pruitt held on to his job as the embarrassing revelations piled up like so many used mattresses: his profligate spending on posh travel, over-the-top security, and ridiculous, self-aggrandizing office supplies; his directing agency staffers to run his personal errands, including finding him a place to live in Washington and combing hotels for his favorite skin cream; his attempts to score his wife a high-paying job, possibly involving chicken nuggets and waffle fries. Every week seemed to bring fresh examples of Mr. Pruitt's shameless and yet surprisingly petty misuse of his office.

Mr. Trump's willingness to tolerate Mr. Pruitt's chicanery was not surprising. The two men share an environmental philosophy that may be roughly summarized as "industry over science," and, for all his flaws, Mr. Pruitt was tireless in the crusade to dismantle environmental protections. His greatest hits include playing a key role in getting Mr. Trump to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement; pushing the repeal of numerous Obama-era regulations, including those to cut greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and automobiles; and instituting a policy that barred scientists who receive federal grants from serving on the E.P.A.'s advisory committees, while simultaneously welcoming corporate representatives onto these panels. Just last month, *The Times* reported that the E.P.A. had decided for the most part not to consider exposure to chemicals through the air, water or ground when it is evaluating whether they should be regulated or banned under a bipartisan law passed in 2016.

Impressively, Mr. Pruitt was both a sneak and a thug. Self-aware enough to realize that some of what he was up to — especially his snuggling up to certain industry interests — might be viewed negatively by some, he took pains to keep his activities under wraps. Aides have accused him of keeping secret schedules and calendars, employing multiple email accounts and conducting important agency business on phones other than his own to ensure that the calls wouldn't show up on official logs.

At the same time, staff members who tried to curtail some of Mr. Pruitt's more egregious behavior were demoted, reassigned or fired.

Upon accepting Mr. Pruitt's resignation, Mr. Trump felt moved to tweet supportively: "Within the Agency Scott has done an outstanding job, and I will always be thankful to him for this." Speaking to reporters on Air Force One, Mr. Trump said Mr. Pruitt was a "terrific guy." The president said the decision to leave was Mr. Pruitt's, but then noted, "We've been talking about it for a little while."

The daily drumbeat of toxic publicity finally turned the president against his E.P.A. chief. "It's one thing after another with this guy," Mr. Trump told a friend recently.

Not that Mr. Trump is likely to lose much sleep over Mr. Pruitt's departure. Mr. Pruitt's successor, Andrew Wheeler, is expected to stay the antiregulatory course, albeit presumably without drawing as many headlines, by avoiding his predecessor's penchant for scandal. Mr. Wheeler is a former coal industry lobbyist and a former aide to Senator James Inhofe, the Oklahoma Republican who has denied the existence of climate change and has long opposed legislation to address that global problem.

One task facing Mr. Wheeler — who publicly opposed Mr. Trump during the Republican presidential primaries — is to rebuild morale at the E.P.A. Much of the agency's career staff has felt under siege, not just because of Mr. Pruitt's policies and bullying behavior, but also because of his contempt for science and professional expertise. When President Trump's tweet appeared announcing the Pruitt resignation, there were reports of cheering in the hallways.

In the end, Mr. Pruitt was driven from office for having abused his position so outrageously. But if Mr. Trump continues down the same policy paths, as seems likely, Mr. Pruitt's more lasting legacy, along with the president's, will be an overheated planet and shortened life spans.

How Andrew Wheeler, The New Acting E.P.A. Chief, Differs From Scott Pruitt

By Coral Davenport

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

The departure of Scott Pruitt, the scandal-plagued former head of the Environmental Protection Agency, means that the agency will be led in the coming months by Mr. Pruitt's deputy, Andrew Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist who shares Mr. Pruitt's zeal to undo environmental regulations.

But unlike Mr. Pruitt — who had come to Washington as an outsider and aspiring politician, only to get caught up in a swirl of controversy over his costly first-class travel and security spending — Mr. Wheeler is viewed as a consummate Washington insider who avoids the limelight and has spent years effectively navigating the rules. For that reason, Mr. Wheeler's friends and critics alike say, he could ultimately prove to be more effective than his controversial former boss in implementing President Trump's deregulatory agenda.

On Thursday afternoon, President Trump tweeted that he had accepted Mr. Pruitt's resignation and that Mr. Wheeler would take over as acting director of the agency.

Mr. Wheeler is expected to serve in an acting capacity as head of the E.P.A. until President Trump nominates a new agency chief, who must then be confirmed by the Senate.

That process could take months and potentially stretch past the November midterm elections.

It is possible that Mr. Trump could nominate Mr. Wheeler to the top job. However, several other names have also been mentioned as possible successors to Mr. Pruitt, including Donald Van der Vaart, a former senior environmental official in North Carolina. Mr. Pruitt selected him to serve on an E.P.A. scientific advisory board.

In a June interview with the Washington Examiner, Mr. Wheeler said he had no interest in taking over his boss's job. "I could have put my hat in the ring for the administrator. I wasn't interested in that. I am still not interested in that," he said.

Mr. Wheeler will now step in as the acting chief of an agency that has been central to President Trump's signature campaign promise of stripping away regulations.

During Mr. Pruitt's tenure, the former Oklahoma attorney general gained headlines for his aggressive push to roll back dozens of regulations governing clean air and water, and fighting against Obama-era rules focused on limiting carbon emissions. In recent months, however, Mr. Pruitt's policy efforts were overshadowed by a running stream of alleged ethics violations.

Mr. Pruitt is the subject of at least 13 federal investigations, and a government watchdog agency earlier this year concluded that he had broken the law with his purchase of a \$43,000 secure telephone booth for his office. He is also under investigation for his 2017 \$50-a-night lease of a condominium from the wife of a powerful Washington lobbyist, and for accusations that he demoted or sidelined E.P.A. employees who questioned his actions.

The New York Times on Thursday reported on new questions about whether aides to Mr. Pruitt had deleted sensitive information about his meetings from his public schedule, potentially in violation of the law.

The allegations and investigations came as Mr. Pruitt appeared to be using his job in the Trump administration to position himself for an eventual run at political office, perhaps as Senator or Governor in Oklahoma with an eventual eye on the presidency. At the same time, many of Mr. Pruitt's policy initiatives have stumbled because of haste or imprecision. At least six have been struck down by the courts.

By contrast, Mr. Wheeler tends to eschew the limelight, his colleagues said. His career was built around quietly and incrementally advancing the interests of the fossil-fuel industry, chiefly by weakening or delaying federal regulations.

Mr. Wheeler has worked in Washington for more than 20 years. He is a former chief of staff to Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe, the conservative Republican who has become known as Washington's most prominent denialist of the established science of human-caused climate change. Mr. Wheeler also worked at the E.P.A. during the administration of the first President George Bush. More recently, he lobbied

for the coal company Murray Energy, whose chief executive, Robert E. Murray, has been a supporter and adviser of Mr. Trump's.

Environmentalists see in Mr. Wheeler a powerful ally of polluting industries and enemy of clean air and water. "Like Pruitt, this veteran coal lobby lobbyist has shown only disdain for the E.P.A.'s vital mission to protect Americans' health and our environment," said Ana Unruh Cohen, managing director for government affairs at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an advocacy group.

Mr. Wheeler has appeared to embrace criticism from the left that he is an ally of fossil fuels, according to email exchanges obtained by the Sierra Club under a Freedom of Information Act request. Last October, soon after Mr. Wheeler was nominated to his position as deputy director, he sent an email to Mr. Pruitt's chief of staff, Ryan Jackson, a longtime friend, with a headline from The Onion, the satirical publication: "EPA Promotes Pulsating Black Sludge to Deputy Director."

"Welcome, pulsating black sludge," Mr. Jackson responded. "I guess I'm going to have to get the cleaning crews to come in more often."

Washington insiders describe Mr. Wheeler as well positioned to pursue Mr. Trump's agenda as effectively as Mr. Pruitt, or even more so, by moving more slowly but in ways likelier to withstand legal challenge. "Andrew is one of the most well-known, well-respected policy professionals in Washington on energy and environment — he knows everybody," said Matthew Dempsey, a former colleague of Mr. Wheeler's in Mr. Inhofe's office, who currently works for a lobbying firm representing the oil and gas industry.

We know. Global warming is daunting. So here's a place to start: 17 often-asked questions with some straightforward answers.

"He will be similar to Pruitt in terms of the agenda — he understands the Trump administration and will carry out the agenda," said Mr. Dempsey. "But he's been around Washington a long time. He knows how D.C. works and he does things by the book."

The departure of Mr. Pruitt, a former protégé of Mr. Inhofe's, and rise of Mr. Wheeler represents the powerful influence of Mr. Inhofe on the Trump administration's environment policy. Mr. Inhofe had long championed Mr. Pruitt's political career, and it was speculated that Mr. Pruitt would one day run for Mr. Inhofe's Senate seat in Oklahoma.

Mr. Wheeler is one of a group of former Inhofe staff members, loosely known as the "Inhofe mafia," who now work in energy and environment policy positions across the Trump administration and in top Washington lobbying firms.

Mr. Inhofe cheered Mr. Wheeler's arrival at the E.P.A. earlier this year. "Andy Wheeler is the most competent and qualified person for the job he's been asked to fulfill," Mr. Inhofe said.

Mr. Wheeler's rise also represents a victory of influence for another of his former bosses, the coal magnate and Trump adviser Robert Murray.

A few weeks after Mr. Trump's inauguration, Mr. Murray, who contributed \$300,000 to Mr. Trump's inauguration fund, presented the president with a wish list of regulations that he wanted to see lifted from the coal industry. In particular, Mr. Murray has pushed Mr. Trump to undo President Barack Obama's regulations designed to curb planet-warming pollution from coal-fired power plants, a leading cause of global warming. Mr. Trump then assigned Mr. Pruitt to roll back those rules.

Since President Trump's inauguration, staffers of the White House and federal agencies have left in firings and resignations, one after the other.

Like Mr. Trump, Mr. Inhofe and Mr. Pruitt, Mr. Wheeler has questioned the established science of human-caused climate change. In 2010, Mr. Wheeler criticized the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world's leading scientific authority on global warming, writing in a blog post that it has "has functioned more as a political body than a scientific body."

However, some Democrats have offered at least modest praise of Mr. Wheeler — as he himself noted in another email exchange with Mr. Jackson.

After his November confirmation hearing, Mr. Wheeler emailed Mr. Jackson. "Everyone seemed to think I did a really good job, including Inhofe, Capito and Mr. Murray. Carper and Cardin both said really nice things about me," he wrote.

He was apparently, referring to Democratic Senators Thomas Carper of Delaware and Ben Cardin of Maryland, both of whom are advocates of strong environmental regulations, and Senator Shelley Moore Capito, the Republican from West Virginia, who is one of Washington's strongest advocates for the coal industry.

In a statement at Mr. Wheeler's confirmation hearing, Mr. Carper said, "As a longtime staffer for the senior senator from Oklahoma, Mr. Wheeler was someone with whom we didn't always agree on each and every policy, but he did prove to be one with whom we were able to work together on policies that we did agree on." However, Mr. Carper did eventually vote against Mr. Wheeler's confirmation to his position as deputy.

While it is likely that Mr. Wheeler, as the acting E.P.A. chief, will be effective in implementing Mr. Trump's deregulatory agenda, one potential obstacle to his being nominated by the president to fill the job permanently is his record of opposing Mr. Trump during the presidential campaign. In a Facebook post on February 29, 2016, Mr. Wheeler penned a strong critique of Mr. Trump that has since been deleted.

"If you are considering voting for Donald Trump please think about the following: 1) no one really knows what his

political beliefs are, he has donated to both parties over the years and to people with completely different views. 2) he has demonstrated through the debates and interviews that he doesn't understand how government works," he wrote. Mr. Wheeler's post also suggested that, as a businessman, Mr. Trump "really hasn't been that successful."

Neither Mr. Wheeler nor two White House spokesmen responded to requests for comment about the Facebook post.

New Leader At EPA Is Former Coal Lobbyist, Senate Staffer

By Matthew Daly

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

The new leader of the Environmental Protection Agency is a former coal industry lobbyist who helped lead an industry fight against regulations that protect Americans' health and address climate change.

Andrew Wheeler, the No. 2 official at EPA, will take over as acting administrator Monday now that embattled administrator Scott Pruitt has resigned.

The Senate confirmed Wheeler as the agency's deputy administrator in April.

President Donald Trump tweeted he has "no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda. ... The future of the EPA is very bright!"

Republicans say Wheeler is well-qualified to lead the EPA, having worked at the agency early in his career. He also was a top aide at the Senate Environment Committee before becoming a lobbyist.

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Former Coal Lobbyist Takes Over EPA From Embattled Chief Pruitt

By Jennifer A Dlouhy

[Bloomberg News](#), July 5, 2018

The new head of the EPA is a former Senate staffer who has worked behind the scenes to quash climate change legislation and promote coal.

Andrew Wheeler, 53, now the Environmental Protection Agency's No. 2 official, will take over Monday as acting administrator following the resignation of Scott Pruitt. Wheeler could bring a quiet effectiveness to the top job that some environmentalists say they fear will make him a more formidable foe than Pruitt.

"There is no time for celebration. We need to keep up our intense vigilance because the Trump administration's anti-environmental, anti-public health deregulatory agenda continues," said Tom Pelton with the Environmental Integrity Project. Wheeler, he said, "has a background just as biased

toward industry as Scott Pruitt, so we and other environmental advocates are going to have to watch Wheeler just as closely as we did his former boss.”

Wheeler has wedded himself to President Donald Trump and Pruitt’s environmental agenda – which has won him the backing of industry. And in a June 27 interview, Wheeler said he’s proud of his lobbying past. Although he says being called a “coal lobbyist,” isn’t derogatory, it irritates him because his advocacy on energy and environmental issues was broader than any single issue.

Read More: Pruitt Deputy Silenced as Coal-Industry Past Forces EPA Recusals

Wheeler said his priorities at the EPA include boosting certainty around environmental permitting and enforcement actions. Delays in getting essential permits – or decisions about them – especially hurt small businesses, he said.

Wheeler also says he wants the EPA to get better at telling affected communities about potential risks in straightforward, easy-to-understand ways – erring on the side of speed, even if the agency must correct information later on.

Trump praised Wheeler, telling reporters on Air Force One Thursday that the incoming acting administrator is “a very environmental person.”

“Andy is going to do a great job,” he said.

Stephen Brown, a vice president of federal government affairs with refiner Andeavor, said it’s doubtful the change at the top of the EPA will dramatically shift the agency’s policy direction under Trump. Some changes may even be easier, he said.

“The agency will likely run smoother and generate less collateral baggage when moving major initiatives,” Brown said by email. “Andy knows how to make the trains within the agency and in the political arenas run on time.” Toxic Chemicals

Wheeler’s entire professional life has been tethered to the EPA, beginning in 1991, when he was hired for a non-political job focusing on toxic chemicals.

After four years working at the EPA under former presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, he shifted to Capitol Hill, working for Republicans on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. That included time as an adviser to Senator James Inhofe, the Oklahoma Republican who famously carried a snowball on to the Senate floor to dispute the impacts of climate change.

After Wheeler left Capitol Hill in 2009, he took on a cadre of lobbying clients, eventually leading FaegreBD Consulting’s energy and environment practice group. His job was dedicated to methodically and deliberately pursuing policy outcomes for chemical manufacturer Celanese Corp., uranium miner Energy Fuels Resources Inc., utility holding company Xcel Energy Inc. and other clients.

Earlier: Senate Confirms Former Coal Lobbyist to Be EPA’s Number Two

Wheeler lobbied the Trump administration last year to take emergency action to shore up coal-fired power plants on behalf of coal producer Murray Energy Corp. Wheeler also arranged at least one meeting last March between the company’s chief executive officer, Robert E. Murray, and Energy Secretary Rick Perry to press for a host of regulatory actions, according to newly disclosed correspondence.

As EPA’s deputy administrator, Wheeler says he was recused from administration deliberations over possible intervention to stem the closing of coal and nuclear power plants, including at least one interagency meeting on the issue. Wheeler allows that he “probably could” get involved with the subject under the strict terms of a recusal statement that allows him to sometimes participate in particular matters of general applicability, but he vowed not to since he lobbied on the issue.

Wheeler has a dry humor and a highly cultivated skill for deeply listening to colleagues and subordinates, said Matt Dempsey, a former Senate staffer who also worked for Inhofe. Wheeler knows how to “avoid problems” and “work with people” to achieve enduring changes, Dempsey said.

“He’s trying to make dramatic changes – but ones that will stick,” Dempsey said. “The kind of change he’s bringing is long-lasting.” Conservative’s Misgivings

Some conservatives fret that Wheeler’s deep ties to the EPA – and his reputation as having respect for the agency as an institution – could discourage him from broadly overhauling the agency and its policies.

“Andy’s principal advantage is that he has a deep and historical knowledge of many of the issues facing the agency,” said Republican energy strategist Mike McKenna. “His principal challenge will probably be the need to balance concern for the institution with a desire to execute the president’s agenda.”

Although Wheeler collaborated with Democrats to pass highway bills and water infrastructure legislation, some of his biggest environmental policy achievements may be in what he blocked from happening. For instance, Wheeler helped kill legislation to put a cap on carbon dioxide emissions in 2008 by emphasizing how the proposal could boost the cost of energy, making any vote to support it politically risky as gasoline prices spiked.

Wheeler appears to share none of the personality traits and habits that got Pruitt into hot water. Employee Relations

Unlike Pruitt, who did not aggressively consult with EPA’s career employees, Wheeler has sought them out. And he has drawn on his EPA work history to try and as he tries to win trust with career employees at the agency amid staff cutbacks and concerns the EPA is retreating from the fight against climate change.

"The career employees at EPA are some of the most dedicated employees in the federal government because they grow up wanting to do something for the environment and that's why they come here," he said in a June 27 interview.

While Pruitt toured the country to highlight big policy initiatives for farmers and oil drillers, Wheeler eschews the limelight with a humility cultivated by years on Capitol Hill, where congressional aides know their role in meetings is often to hug the wall, not take a seat at the table.

"He is level-headed, soft-spoken and knows how to get things done" said Myron Ebell, director of the Center for Energy and Environment at the Competitive Enterprise Institute. "During his tenure on the committee, he helped the senator defeat ruinous cap-and-trade legislation and also pass major energy legislation with bipartisan support."

There is no doubt Wheeler shares many of Pruitt's views. In 2010, Wheeler took aim at the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, saying it was functioning "more as a political body than a scientific body," and had "blurred the lines between science and advocacy" so much that its scientific conclusions were unreliable.

Meet Andrew Wheeler: The Ex-Washington Lobbyist Now At EPA's Helm

By C. Ryan Barber

[Law](#), July 5, 2018

After months of mounting scrutiny over his spending habits and alleged ethical lapses, Scott Pruitt resigned on Thursday as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, a move President Donald Trump announced in a series of tweets.

EPA's Acting Administrator Has Long Lobbying Record On Issues Before The Agency

By Steven Mufson

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

The No. 2 official at the Environmental Protection Agency, Andrew Wheeler, has spent a decade working for just the sort of companies he will now be expected to regulate as EPA's acting administrator.

Even if Wheeler ends up recusing himself from some decisions, his record as a lobbyist at the firm Faegre Baker Daniels Consulting suggests he will have no trouble picking up where Pruitt left off. Wheeler represented energy companies, mining companies and a mixture of others with issues ranging from food to salvaging automobiles. Among his professional activities, he listed his post as vice president of the Washington Coal Club.

With the scandal-plagued EPA administrator Scott Pruitt stepping down Thursday amid investigations and criticism even from fellow Republicans, Wheeler provides an

appealing alternative for those hoping to continue to roll back key EPA policies — and a continuing challenge for environmental groups.

"I have no doubt that Andy will continue on with our great and lasting EPA agenda," President Trump tweeted as he announced that he had accepted Pruitt's resignation. "We have made tremendous progress and the future of the EPA is very bright!"

The Senate confirmed Wheeler for the deputy slot in April by a 53-to-45 vote.

"There is every reason to expect that he will pursue just as vigorously all the regulatory policies and initiatives in progress that were initiated by Pruitt," said Joseph Goffman, executive director of Harvard Law School's environmental law program.

As a lobbyist, Wheeler's best-paying client was the coal mining firm Murray Energy, which paid the firm \$300,000 or more annually from 2009 through 2017, according to records from the Center for Responsive Politics.

Wheeler arranged and attended a March 28, 2017, meeting between Robert E. Murray, the company's chief executive, and Energy Secretary Rick Perry. Murray, who had contributed heavily to the Trump campaign, laid out a four-page plan for rolling back regulations and protecting coal plants in danger of closing because of competition from other fuel supplies.

The Trump administration has already taken steps to address most of the issues on Murray's list. The president recently ordered the Energy Department invoke Cold War era energy emergency powers to take actions that would prevent the closure of coal and nuclear power plants for at least two years, which is what Murray has been seeking.

Wheeler had served as senior aide to Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), who rejects the notion of climate change. And as staff director and chief counsel to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, he worked to defeat climate-related legislation that came before lawmakers.

He supported efforts to exempt industrial plants from pollution controls in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and limit their liability for harm caused by the release of toxic chemicals. He favored the elimination of the New Source Review permitting process that is an important part of environmental legislation.

As a lobbyist, Wheeler commented on a 2010 National Journal blog post that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change "has functioned more as a political body than a scientific body" and that the group should revisit its 2009 finding that carbon-dioxide emissions posed a threat to public health.

He also suggested that lawmakers back a proposal by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) to overturn the endangerment finding. In 2007, the Supreme Court ruled that

the Clean Air Act required EPA to come up with a plan to curb emissions of greenhouse gases. Wheeler said overturning the court decision would “allow legislators to craft sensible energy policy that can promote energy independence without killing our domestic production of fossil fuels.”

“Wheeler is viewed generally as a sort of standard-issue member of the Washington D.C. policy and lobbying ecosystem,” said Goffman, a Democrat who worked at EPA and opposite Wheeler on the Senate energy committee.

“If the concern, though, is policy and public health protection and the way EPA functions, then I think Andy Wheeler can be counted on, unfortunately, to carry out exactly the same policies and reflect exactly the same ideology as Pruitt,” Goffman continued. “He is a member of the very same coalition Pruitt has been representing.”

During his decade as a lobbyist, Wheeler also represented Energy Fuels Resources, a uranium mining firm that could benefit from Trump’s December announcement to halve the size of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Wheeler was lobbying the administration about the issue nearly nine months before the announcement.

In May 2017, Energy Fuels wrote a letter asking the administration to change the monument’s boundaries because of “many other known uranium and vanadium deposits” that “could provide valuable energy and mineral resources in the future.”

Another former Wheeler client, the Minneapolis-based utility Xcel, has fought an EPA regulation that would require coal plants built between 1962 and 1977 to upgrade their facilities with scrubbers to meet sulfur dioxide emissions standards. Installing scrubbers could be costly for Xcel. One of its coal units in Amarillo, Tex., dates back to 1976.

The Bear Head LNG Corp. also paid Wheeler’s firm at least \$10,000 last year. The company, a subsidiary of LNG, wants to export liquefied natural gas from Nova Scotia, and it needed Energy Department approval to export natural gas produced in the United States.

In 2010, a group called the Parent South Coast Air Quality Management District paid Wheeler’s firm \$250,000 to help in its battle against an EPA regulation that would limit ozone emissions. Since ozone is a pollutant that affects people in immediate areas, the regulation would force companies within a certain zone to cut emissions.

Although the group hadn’t engaged Wheeler in recent years, it has continued fighting the EPA in court. The group lost in a Feb. 16 decision written by Judge David B. Sentelle of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

Another client, Darling Ingredients, paid Wheeler’s firm \$420,000 over the past three years. The company has a stake in reforms of the complicated Renewable Fuel Standard and the tax credit for companies that blend ethanol with gasoline.

The Irving, Tex.-based company also agreed in 2016 to settle allegations of Clean Water Act violations at four facilities used to store petroleum fuels, vegetable oils and animal fats for just \$99,000. In 2014, the company paid a \$1.1 million penalty to EPA.

Wheeler also represented Whirlpool, Sargento Foods, Underwriters Laboratories, the Nuclear Energy Institute, the Coalition for Domestic Medical Isotope Supply and Insurance Auto Auctions, which deals in large numbers of salvaged cars.

But Murray Energy was his steadiest client. In 2014, Murray joined the fight against the Obama administration’s landmark rule limiting mercury and other toxic emissions from coal- and oil-fired power plants.

In an amicus brief in support of states and industry groups, the firm told the Supreme Court that the rule undermined state and local efforts to provide affordable and reliable electricity. Two years later, it sued to block EPA from regulating mercury from power plants under the Clean Air Act.

Murray, who said he has not had any contact with Wheeler since he became deputy administrator, said in an email that “Scott Pruitt was an exceptional Administrator of the U.S. EPA in overturning the illegal actions of the Obama Administration. It is a tragedy for America to lose such a qualified Administrator.”

Many Republicans will find that track record makes Wheeler the sort of EPA leader they want.

“Andrew Wheeler is the perfect choice to serve as Acting Administrator,” Inhofe said in a statement Thursday. “Andrew worked for me for 14 years, has an impeccable reputation and has the experience to be a strong leader at the EPA. I have no doubt and complete confidence he will continue the important deregulatory work that Scott Pruitt started while being a good steward of the environment.”

E.P.A. Aide Questioned Deleting Sensitive Meeting Details. Then She Was Fired.

By Coral Davenport, Lisa Friedman, Eric Lipton And Steve Eder

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the subject of numerous investigations into claims that he used agency resources for personal benefit, is now facing questions about whether aides deleted sensitive information about his meetings from his public schedule and potentially violated the law in doing so.

Last summer one of his senior schedulers, Madeline G. Morris, was fired by Mr. Pruitt’s former deputy chief of staff, Kevin Chmielewski, who said he let her go because she was questioning the practice of retroactively deleting meetings from the calendar. Mr. Chmielewski has emerged as a harsh

critic of Mr. Pruitt after a bitter falling out that led to his departure from the agency as well.

Ms. Morris, who started work as Mr. Pruitt's scheduler in June 2017, confirmed Wednesday that she was fired after she raised objections about the deletions, which she believed were illegal, although she said that Mr. Chmielewski did not tell her his reasons for firing her. One case involved the deletion of several of Mr. Pruitt's meetings during a spring 2017 trip to Rome, including one with a controversial cardinal then under investigation for sexual assault.

The E.P.A. acknowledged in a series of legal memos last year that it did in fact direct an agency scheduler — although it did not name the person — to revise Mr. Pruitt's daily calendar retroactively. The agency said it was doing so to remove errors that had been left in the electronic record after various events were canceled or happened differently than expected.

Ryan Jackson, Mr. Pruitt's chief of staff, dismissed Mr. Chmielewski's criticism as a fabrication by a disgruntled former employee. "Whatever he's telling you about altering calendars is not correct," Mr. Jackson said.

Ms. Morris was called last July by two agency lawyers, who told her that the changes she was making to Mr. Pruitt's schedule might be illegal, according to a person familiar with the conversation. The following month, Ms. Morris noticed that a number of changes made to the record of a trip Mr. Pruitt had taken to Italy. Ms. Morris questioned the legality of the changes to Mr. Chmielewski and Mr. Jackson, and a few days later was fired, he said.

A retroactive deletion of meetings and attendees from a Cabinet official's public records could violate the Federal Records Act, which requires agencies to maintain and preserve public documents, as well as a law prohibiting intentional distortion of federal records. In another potential violation of federal law, the E.P.A. continued to pay Ms. Morris for six weeks after she was fired from the agency.

Asked to explain Ms. Morris' departure from the E.P.A., as well as his own email correspondence indicating that she was being paid for time not worked, Mr. Jackson declined to comment. He also declined to comment on whether Ms. Morris was simply being asked to reconcile calendars.

The E.P.A. spokesman and the agency's general counsel declined to comment.

Ms. Morris had nearly a decade of experience in Washington and solid Republican credentials, according to her résumé. She worked for former Representative Denny Rehberg, a Montana Republican, as an assistant and scheduler, before working as a federal affairs specialist for Koch Companies Public Sector, the lobbying arm of Koch Industries, the conglomerate long run by the conservative brothers David H. and Charles Koch.

Ms. Morris, whose start date at the E.P.A. was June 18, was an executive scheduler with an annual salary of \$90,350.

She handled a variety of planning needs for Mr. Pruitt, including requests for meetings with executives from Toyota and Chevron.

The account of the calendar deletions and the aftermath is based on interviews with four people who were working at the agency at the time, including Mr. Chmielewski and three others who asked not to be identified out of concern for retaliation.

In July 2017, according to Mr. Chmielewski, Ms. Morris was instructed by him and Mr. Jackson to retroactively delete some meetings Mr. Pruitt held with lobbyists and replace them with staff meetings in the calendar, which was maintained in Microsoft Outlook. He and other people familiar with the calendar also said Ms. Morris was asked not to enter some of Mr. Pruitt's meetings on the official calendar.

Mr. Chmielewski cited an August 2017 meeting with billionaire Denver-based businessman Philip Anschutz, a prominent donor to Republican Senate candidates and owner of an energy company regulated by the agency. Mr. Pruitt's calendar for that day, which was publicly released, does not include the meeting.

Mr. Anschutz declined to comment, and didn't dispute that the meeting occurred.

Three agency memos drafted last year as these changes were being made offer an alternative explanation for the work that Ms. Morris was doing.

"Scheduling staff corrected inaccurate entries by adding meetings that occurred but were not originally reflected on the schedule, removing meetings that were on the schedule but did not occur or that Administrator Pruitt did not attend," said one memo from last September, signed by Mr. Jackson.

But the agency, as it undertook this process, realized itself that it was doing something wrong: It was deleting items from Mr. Pruitt's calendar, meaning it was wrongly modifying a public record. Moving forward, the agency agreed to block out incorrect details, instead of deleting meetings, before it made the schedule public.

After Ms. Morris made earlier deletions, the two E.P.A. attorneys — who became aware of the issue after receiving Outlook emails notifying them that their names had been removed from a past meeting — told Ms. Morris to stop making deletions to the calendar, according to a person familiar with the call.

About a month later, Ms. Morris noticed that a number of meetings had been deleted from a trip Mr. Pruitt had taken to Italy, according to Mr. Chmielewski. The Rome events that were removed from the official calendar included a series of visits at the Vatican — including a special tour of the necropolis below St. Peter's Basilica — as well as one meeting with Cardinal George Pell, a prominent Vatican leader who was then being investigated on allegations of sexual abuse. (He has denied the allegations.)

Mr. Jackson in May told the Times that he did not know why Cardinal Pell's name was not on Mr. Pruitt's calendar and denied any discussion about removing him.

But last week Mr. Jackson acknowledged to the House Oversight and Reform Committee, one of the bodies investigating Mr. Pruitt's management practices, that he instructed staff to remove references to Cardinal Pell from the public schedule. According to a committee aide familiar with the interview, Mr. Jackson told investigators that he ordered Cardinal Pell's name to be removed because he considered it a "personal dinner" and because no E.P.A. business was conducted. About 15 people attended the dinner at which Mr. Pruitt discussed climate change, according to agency emails.

Ms. Morris pointed out the changes and the possibility that they were illegal to Mr. Chmielewski, he said, as well as to Mr. Jackson. On August 31, a few days after Ms. Morris raised these objections (and two and a half months after she had started at the agency) Ms. Morris was told that it would be her last day.

Mr. Chmielewski confirmed the sequence of events and acknowledged that by firing Ms. Morris for refusing to modify the calendars he was in effect endorsing the practice. "She refused — and I didn't blame her — she refused to falsify the schedule," Mr. Chmielewski said in an interview, adding, "It was me and Ryan that fired her."

Asked why Ms. Morris was fired, Mr. Jackson said, "I don't really think Maddy would appreciate me talking about the circumstances of her separation from here."

After being fired, Ms. Morris stayed with her sister's family in Pittsburgh, and described to them what had happened.

"She told us that she had alerted her chief of staff that some things had disappeared from the schedule, and that it was illegal, and that later that week she was called in and they told her she was being dismissed," said Christopher Marshall, Ms. Morris' brother-in-law. "She was told she would never find out why."

He added, "Maddy thought it was probably because of the scheduling thing, but we could never be sure."

In an unusual arrangement, Ms. Morris also continued to receive pay for six weeks after she left the E.P.A., according to agency emails that were released as part of a public records lawsuit by the Sierra Club, an environmental group, as well as a United States Office of Personnel Management document obtained by The New York Times.

The personnel record shows Ms. Morris remained on the payroll through Oct. 14. Paying a federal employee for work not performed is prohibited by federal law. Under the government's personnel policy, neither political appointees nor employees who work for the federal government for less than 12 months are entitled to severance pay.

"We have not put in any paperwork on you so no one is aware of any actions," Mr. Jackson wrote in a Sept. 22, 2017,

email to Ms. Morris. Earlier that day, she had asked about not having received a paycheck she was expecting after she had stopped working at the agency. "I just wanted to see if something has changed since our conversation about being paid a few months," she wrote.

"I've never heard of anything like this — this is highly irregular and appears to flout the rules," said Jeffrey Lubbers, a professor of administrative law at American University, of the terms of Ms. Morris' dismissal and payment.

Mr. Pruitt is facing 13 federal investigations over ethics and other issues, including an inquiry by Office of Special Counsel, an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency, which is examining Mr. Pruitt's personnel practices and allegations that he may have used his E.P.A. office for political purposes, people with knowledge of the investigation have told The Times.

Speaking to reporter aboard Air Force One on Tuesday, Hogan Gidley, a White House spokesman, said of Mr. Pruitt: "The reports that have come out are something the President is concerned about, and there are many of those reports." But, he added that Mr. Trump feels the administrator has done a "really good job at deregulating the government."

E.P.A. Drafts Rule On Coal Plants To Replace Clean Power Plan

By Lisa Friedman And Brad Plumer

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has drafted a new proposal to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants, one that is far less stringent than the climate plan finalized in 2015 by former President Barack Obama.

In writing the new rule to replace Mr. Obama's Clean Power Plan, the Trump administration is essentially accepting, for now, that the federal government is legally obligated to take action to address the greenhouse gases that cause global warming, even as President Trump has dismissed established climate science. But the new proposal is likely to spur only small tweaks to the nation's energy system.

Details of the plan, which is being drafted by the Environmental Protection Agency and is expected to be sent to the White House for approval in coming days, were described to The New York Times by industry officials who have worked closely with the agency to shape the rule.

Allison D. Wood, a partner at Hunton & Williams who represents several electric utilities, described it as "very significant" that the administration was putting forward a regulation that acknowledged the obligation to regulate planet-warming emissions.

The proposal, according to industry attorneys familiar with the plan, would recommend regulating the emissions of

individual coal plants, which would call for modest upgrades, such as improving efficiency or substituting fuel. That contrasts with the more ambitious goals of the Clean Power Plan, which encouraged utilities to make broader systemic changes to cut emissions, such as switching from coal to natural gas or renewable power.

The move comes as Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the E.P.A., faces fresh questions about his tenure. Mr. Pruitt is the subject of 13 federal investigations into his ethics, spending and management practices. John F. Kelly, the White House chief of staff, has urged his departure. Still, Mr. Pruitt enjoys a strong relationship with President Trump. If Mr. Pruitt were to resign, several people close to him said, it would likely be on a high note after a significant regulatory victory.

A new plan to address emissions from power plants might, perhaps incongruously, fit that bill.

Last October, when Mr. Pruitt announced that he would formally repeal the Clean Power Plan, industry leaders applauded the move. But behind the scenes, they also urged Mr. Pruitt to put forward a replacement, preferably one far weaker than the original.

The reasoning was twofold. Many companies worried that simply repealing the climate rule without offering a substitute would not hold up in court — and could leave an opening for even tougher regulations under a future Democratic president. But some companies also wanted to signal that they took climate change seriously.

“The climate issue is, we think, here to stay, so we do think it makes sense to have some sort of regulation,” said John M. McManus, senior vice president of environmental services at American Electric Power, one of the country’s biggest electric companies.

For months, Mr. Pruitt — who had made a name for himself as attorney general of Oklahoma for opposing Mr. Obama’s climate policies — was skeptical of the benefit of crafting a replacement. Robert E. Murray, a mining executive and a longtime Trump donor, asserted that the E.P.A. should instead challenge the entire legal foundation for regulating greenhouse gases, a 2009 agency ruling known as the endangerment finding.

“Virtually everyone who cares about this issue has argued otherwise,” said Jeffrey R. Holmstead, a partner at the firm Bracewell and a former E.P.A. air chief. “Industry believes the E.P.A. has an obligation to regulate CO₂ from power plants, and they would be better off with a replacement rule.”

Ultimately, Mr. Pruitt chose that path, and the E.P.A. crafted a new plan that would technically regulate carbon dioxide without forcing major changes on the industry. Among other things, the new proposal would give states significant leeway in enforcing the rules. Industry attorneys said they expected it to borrow elements from a proposal Mr. Pruitt

himself drafted for Oklahoma in 2014, in the course of challenging the Obama administration’s plan.

Michael Abboud, an E.P.A. spokesman, declined a request to discuss the proposal.

In a statement, Mr. Murray said that he would have preferred to see the Clean Power Plan scrapped with no replacement, but that any new plan should ensure “reliable, low-cost and fuel-secure electricity in America” and preserve coal mining jobs.

Before joining the E.P.A., Andrew Wheeler, the current deputy E.P.A. administrator, worked as a lobbyist for Mr. Murray.

While details of the Trump administration’s proposal are not yet public, in the past environmental groups have argued that a narrower regulation would bring little to no benefit for the climate or clean air.

The original Obama-era Clean Power Plan aimed to cut emissions from the nation’s power plants roughly 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. But as market forces have pushed hundreds of coal plants into retirement and as wind and solar power have become cheaper, many states are now on track to exceed those initial targets even in the absence of federal regulation. As a result, many environmentalists contend that the original rules were too weak, not too aggressive.

“We should be taking advantage of the falling cost of clean energy and the fast pace of market change to require even greater reductions, not write a standard that is intended to do nothing,” said David Doniger, director of the Climate and Clean Energy Program at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Once the E.P.A. proposal is formally published, it will need to go through a public comment period before being finalized. The agency is hoping to complete the new rule by early 2019. After that happens, the agency intends to finalize its formal repeal of the Clean Power Plan. Environmental groups and several states have already pledged to challenge those moves in federal court.

Lisa Friedman reports on climate and environmental policy in Washington. A former editor at Climatewire, she has covered nine international climate talks. @LFFriedman

Brad Plumer is a reporter covering climate change, energy policy and other environmental issues for The Times’s climate team.

Scott Pruitt Has A Plan To Replace Obama’s Climate Regulations For Coal Plants

By Michael Bastasch

[Daily Caller](#), July 5, 2018

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will likely replace the Obama administration’s global warming

regulations for coal-fired power with a less stringent and costly rule, industry sources said.

Industry attorneys told The New York Times EPA's draft plan "would recommend regulating the emissions of individual coal plants, which would call for modest upgrades, such as improving efficiency or substituting fuel."

That's much less stringent and costly than the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan (CPP), which would have forced states to cut carbon dioxide emissions from existing coal plants.

The Obama administration planned to use the CPP to meet the goals of the Paris climate accord. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced in October 2017 it would repeal the CPP. (RELATED: Is Scott Pruitt Really On His Way Out? Let's Look At The Evidence)

Democrats and environmentalists were furious with EPA's planned repeal, arguing the CPP was needed to fight global warming and promote green energy.

EPA's proposed repeal, however, did not address whether or not the Trump administration would put another regulation in the CPP's place. TheNYT reported utility industry arguments in favor of putting in place a weaker CO2 emissions rule that would stave off lawsuits from states and activist groups.

Conservative groups, however, have pushed for EPA to open a new review of the 2009 endangerment finding that gave the agency legal pretext to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

At least two groups — the Competitive Enterprise Institute and the Concerned Household Electricity Consumers Council — petitioned EPA to reconsider the endangerment finding, suggesting it could be overturned based on failed global warming predictions.

If the endangerment finding were overturned, EPA would no longer be legally obligated under the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gases, invalidating the CPP and other regulations.

Many legal experts think it's unlikely EPA will be able to overturn the endangerment finding. Utilities and the coal industry seem to favor a weaker CO2 emissions rule to hedge against lawsuits.

The Obama administration proposed the CPP in 2015, but it never went into full effect. The U.S. Supreme Court issued an unprecedented stay against the rule in early 2016 after 28 states sued to overturn the rule.

Pruitt spearheaded legal resistance to the CPP while he was attorney general of Oklahoma. Now, he's in charge of dismantling it.

EPA is expected to send its proposal to the White House in the coming days, TheNYT reported. Even if EPA moves forward with a weaker CO2 emissions rule, the agency will likely face legal challenges.

A coalition of Democratic attorneys general formed by former New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman vowed to use the courts to stop the Trump administration's deregulatory agenda, including the CPP.

Indeed, Schneiderman's coalition already filed suit against the Trump EPA over the CPP. The case was put on hold by federal judges in 2017.

Trump's EPA says repealing the rule will save Americans \$33 billion in compliance costs. The Obama EPA, however, claimed the CPP would only cost \$8.4 billion and deliver public health and climate benefits ranging from \$14 to \$34 billion by 2030.

Former Fox News Executive Bill Shine Joins White House Staff

By Associated Press

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

Former Fox News executive Bill Shine is officially joining the White House.

Shine, the former co-president of President Donald Trump's preferred television channel, will be deputy chief of staff for communications. His expected hiring was reported last week.

The White House said Thursday that Shine "brings over two decades of television programming, communications, and management experience to the role."

His hiring comes as Trump is increasingly putting his stamp on the West Wing, as aides with more traditional experience leave the administration. Friday marks the last day for Joe Hagin, the deputy chief of staff for operations.

Trump has been frustrated with news coverage on his administration heading into a contentious midterm election and the 2020 campaign.

At Fox News, Shine rose from being a producer for Trump confidant Sean Hannity to being the top deputy for founding CEO Roger Ailes. Shine was ousted in May 2017.

He was not accused of harassment like Ailes and former Fox personality Bill O'Reilly. But some accusers said he looked the other way as charges of toxic workplace behavior built up.

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Donald Trump Hires Former Fox News Executive Bill Shine As Top Communications Aide

By David Jackson

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump has hired Fox News executive Bill Shine to head up the White House communications team, the White House said Thursday.

Shine, who lost his job at Fox amid criticism of how the company handled sexual harassment complaints, will hold the title of Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications.

Trump has described Fox as his favorite news network.

The president considered numerous candidates for the communications slot since longtime aide Hope Hicks left the White House in March.

A veteran executive at Fox, Shine left the company a year ago amid a scandal at the news organization over a string of sexual harassment complaints. He departed 10 months after former Fox chairman Roger Ailes was removed over harassment allegations.

Shine himself was never accused of harassment, but lawsuits accused him of helping to cover up Ailes' behavior and disregarding the claims of women who came forward.

Shine has denied any wrongdoing.

Trump Names Former Fox Executive Bill Shine To Communications Job

By Reuters Editorial
[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Former Fox News Exec Bill Shine Joins Trump White House

By Robert Kraychik
[Breitbart](#), July 5, 2018

The White House announced Thursday that Bill Shine, former co-president of Fox News, will be joining the administration in a dual role as assistant to the president and deputy chief of staff for communications.

The announcement came from the office of Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

"President Donald J. Trump announced today that Bill Shine will join the White House staff. Mr. Shine will serve as Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications," the statement reads. "He brings over two decades of television programming, communications, and management experience to the role. Previously, Mr. Shine served as Co-President of Fox News Channel and Fox Business Network."

Shine served as co-president of Fox News after the departure of founding CEO Roger Ailes — until he resigned in May 2017, under fire for his handling of sexual harassment allegations against multiple figures at the company.

Shine's management experience and eye for talent made him a top contender for the job, insiders reportedly said in the run-up to his appointment.

President Trump "sees Shine as someone who can bring some organization and management to the communications team and who knows TV at the highest level in terms of talent and production," one suppose source told CBS News.

The incoming communications director is a former producer for Sean Hannity — one of the President's staunchest media surrogates.

Donald Trump Jr., while traveling with the President on Air Force One to Montana for a rally in Great Falls Thursday evening, praised Shine as a "[c]ompetent, hard working and a believer in making America great again!"

On your marks, get set.... how long till the liberal media and snowflakes start taking shots at the great Bill Shine? Competent, hard working and a believer in making America great again! <https://t.co/iqJqSiI0s7>

— Donald Trump Jr. (@DonaldJTrumpJr) July 5, 2018

Trump Taps Ex-Fox News Exec Bill Shine As Deputy Chief Of Staff

By Dave Boyer
[Washington Times](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump announced Thursday he's hiring former Fox News executive Bill Shine to become White House deputy chief of staff overseeing communications.

"He brings over two decades of television programming, communications, and management experience to the role," the White House said in a statement.

Previously, Mr. Shine worked as co-president of Fox News Channel and Fox Business Network. He left last year under criticism for his handling of sexual harassment cases at the network.

Mr. Shine is close to Fox News host Sean Hannity, one of Mr. Trump's most loyal defenders who confers with the president regularly.

The appointment of Mr. Shine, who will also have the title of assistant to the president, fills an expanded post left vacant by the departure of Communications Director Hope Hicks in March. He is also joining the White House team as Deputy Chief of Staff Joe Hagin prepares to depart.

Mr. Shine is expected to travel with the president Thursday aboard Air Force One to a rally in Montana for Republican Senate candidate Matt Rosendale.

The National Women's Law Center criticized the appointment.

"It's an appalling decision — but it shouldn't be a surprise — that President Trump has rewarded Bill Shine's abysmal record of enabling and concealing sexual harassment," said Fatima Goss Graves, the group's president and CEO. "The president's choice runs counter to widespread efforts to address and prevent sexual

harassment at this moment of reckoning. This country deserves better.”

Bill Shine, Ousted From Fox News In Scandal, Joins White House Communications Team

By Maggie Haberman

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

Bill Shine, the former Fox News executive who was pushed out over his handling of sexual harassment scandals at the network, was named the White House deputy chief of staff for communications on Thursday.

The move formalizes a job that Mr. Shine has been in since earlier this week, according to White House officials. With no vacant office to work in yet, Mr. Shine has been occupying a desk outside the principal deputy press secretary's office, the officials said.

Mr. Shine had been in talks with President Trump about a job since the spring, even playing golf with the president and Sean Hannity, the Fox News host and one of Mr. Shine's close friends. But Mr. Shine had been uncertain that he wanted to make himself a target for fresh scrutiny, people who had talked with him at the time said.

Since then, the communications job has evolved into a position that reports directly to the president, overseeing both the press and communications teams. Mr. Trump has made the communications team a target of his ire throughout his time in office, and Mr. Shine is expected to help revamp it.

Mr. Shine's title is also assistant to the president, though his other duties remain unclear. He declined to comment for this article.

Mr. Shine “brings over two decades of television programming, communications, and management experience to the role,” the White House said in a statement announcing the appointment.

Some close to the White House expect Mr. Shine to serve as an extension of Mr. Hannity, giving him additional insight into the administration.

Mr. Shine was never accused of harassment himself. But his boss, Roger E. Ailes, was, and Mr. Shine was accused in lawsuits of turning a blind eye to a climate that was hostile toward women.

Mr. Shine's hiring has been protested by some conservatives. The website Newsmax, run by Christopher Ruddy, a Trump ally, published an article last week raising questions about the wisdom of bringing Mr. Shine on board given his Fox News baggage.

Former Fox News Executive Bill Shine Joins Trump White House As Deputy Chief Of Staff For Communications

By Paul Farhi And Felicia Sonmez

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

Former Fox News Channel executive Bill Shine is joining the White House as assistant to the president and deputy chief of staff for communications, the White House announced Thursday.

The long-anticipated move follows weeks of speculation that the former Fox News Channel and Fox Business Network co-president was a front-runner for the job, which has remained vacant since former communications director Hope Hicks announced her resignation in February.

In a statement, the White House said Shine “brings over two decades of television programming, communications, and management experience to the role.” He will be tasked with establishing the broader message and tone of the president's agenda.

Shine, who started his two-decade-long career at Fox News as a producer for the show “Hannity & Colmes,” was ousted from his role as co-president last year after lawsuits suggested he enabled alleged sexual harassment by the network's late chairman and chief executive, Roger Ailes.

Shine had recently been seen at the White House and has previously met with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. He was spotted Thursday afternoon getting into Trump's motorcade, according to CNN.

With Thursday's announcement, Shine becomes the fifth communications chief since Trump took office nearly 18 months ago. Before Hicks, Anthony Scaramucci served 10 days in the role. He was preceded by Mike Dubke and Sean Spicer.

The move will bolster the White House's messaging operation ahead of what is shaping up to be a fierce partisan battle over Trump's choice for a successor to retiring Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, set to be unveiled next Monday. It also comes ahead of a trip by Trump next week to Europe, where one of the most closely-scrutinized items on the agenda will be the president's one-on-one summit with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin.

Yet the appointment is also likely to open the White House up to attacks regarding Shine's record at Fox, as well as the Trump administration's response to sexual misconduct allegations against officials within its own ranks. During his time at Fox, Shine helped to build the network into the media juggernaut it is today. But much like his mentor and patron, Ailes, Shine's long tenure was clouded by unsavory allegations and associations with darker chapters in the network's history. Ailes died in May 2017.

Trump himself has been accused of sexual harassment and improper behavior by more than a dozen women, accusations which he denies. And earlier this year, White House staff secretary Rob Porter resigned amid reports that he had physically and emotionally abused his two ex-wives.

Donald Trump Jr., the president's eldest son, was among those cheering Shine's hiring on Thursday — while also anticipating a backlash from the left.

On your marks, get set.... how long till the liberal media and snowflakes start taking shots at the great Bill Shine? Competent, hard working and a believer in making America great again! <https://t.co/iqJqSiOs7>— Donald Trump Jr. (@DonaldJTrumpJr) July 5, 2018

“On your marks, get set.... how long till the liberal media and snowflakes start taking shots at the great Bill Shine?” he wrote on Twitter. “Competent, hard working and a believer in making America great again!”

Angelo Carusone, president of the left-leaning group Media Matters for America, said in a statement that it was “no surprise that the White House selected someone who has Sean Hannity’s personal seal of approval.”

He described Shine as having been “at the helm of Fox News as it transitioned from being a partisan political operation to a pro-Trump propaganda arm” and as having “enabled serial sexual misconduct for years.”

For decades, the daily “message” was Ailes’ job at Fox, and Shine was his dutiful lieutenant. While Ailes focused on the big picture — how to frame the day’s events, who to attack or support — Shine managed the details of running the network. He also managed some of Fox’s biggest stars, most notably prime-time star Sean Hannity, a close confidant with whom Shine sometimes vacationed. The prime-time host set Shine on his path to the top at Fox. It was Hannity, too, who helped broker Shine’s new White House job, according to people familiar with the discussions.

The presidential appointment reunites Trump with Shine, who gave the then-businessman and reality TV star copious airtime on Fox to opine on a range of subjects. Among them was a regular slot on “Fox & Friends,” on which Trump often promoted his false claim that President Barack Obama was not born in the United States. The weekly appearances helped burnish Trump’s political credentials, at least with more than a million viewers of the morning program.

Shine has spent the past 14 months off the public grid following his ouster from Fox last May. He briefly succeeded Ailes as the network’s top executive after Ailes was driven out by sexual harassment allegations, including a lawsuit by former host Gretchen Carlson, which Fox’s parent company settled in mid-2016 for \$20 million.

Shine himself was never directly accused of harassment at Fox. But his latter years at the network were pockmarked by his association with Ailes, especially accusations that he helped facilitate Ailes’s predatory behavior. Shine has consistently denied wrongdoing.

He also was part of Fox’s senior management during the period in which the network was paying millions of dollars in settlements to former employees who had accused Ailes and host Bill O’Reilly of harassment.

He was named in suits filed by Carlson and former network contributors Julie Roginsky and Andrea Tantaros for

his role in allegedly discouraging women at the network from taking their harassment claims to court. Roginsky, who said Ailes sexually harassed her, accused Shine of retaliating against her for her refusal to join “Team Roger,” a cadre of women who supported Ailes in his battle with Carlson. Shine denied those allegations.

He also allegedly played a role in covering up Ailes’s relationship with Laurie Luhn, a former Fox booker who claimed she had a long, abusive affair with Ailes that eventually led to her mental breakdown. Luhn received \$3.1 million from Fox in 2011 to settle her allegations of abuse and mistreatment by Ailes.

Shine’s appointment by Trump on Thursday brought swift rebuke from attorney Nancy Erika Smith, who represented Carlson and Roginsky in their suits against Ailes.

“Roger Ailes’s enabler and confidant is well qualified to speak on behalf of a president who brags about assaulting women and preying on teenage beauty pageant contestants, and pays adult film actresses to be quiet about his adultery,” Smith said. “Being from Fox News, Shine is also well qualified to speak for a president who lies every single day.”

Shine was also implicated in racial discrimination lawsuits filed by Fox employees. That action was settled in May.

Ex-Fox News Exec Bill Shine To Join White House

By Jordan Fabian

[The Hill](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump on Thursday announced that former Fox News executive Bill Shine will join the White House as deputy chief of staff for communications.

The White House said in a brief statement that Shine “brings over two decades of television programming, communications experience to the role.”

Shine’s formal title is assistant to the president and deputy chief of staff for communications.

The announcement ended months of speculation about whether Shine would formally join Trump’s team at the White House.

The hire is expected to generate controversy and pushback against Trump.

Shine left Fox last year amid scrutiny over his handling of sexual harassment allegations against powerful figures at the network.

Those charges led to the high-profile departures of former Fox News Chairman and CEO Roger Ailes, for whom Shine served as a top lieutenant, and former primetime host Bill O’Reilly. Shine was named co-president of the network after Ailes was ousted.

Shine was never officially accused of wrongdoing but faced accusations that he looked the other way as claims of harassment and discrimination mounted.

The former Fox bigwig will fill the communications director role left by Hope Hicks earlier this year.

Shine faces a difficult task: fixing a communications shop that has been riddled by infighting and high turnover. He will be the fifth person to lead the team since Trump's inauguration. The others were Anthony Scaramucci, Michael Dubke, Sean Spicer and Hicks.

His hiring was all but officially decided since late last month. Shine was seen at the White House multiple times this week, most recently being spotted on Thursday afternoon entering Trump's motorcade ahead of the president's planned trip to Montana.

Shine has ties to figures at Fox News who are close with the president, including conservative talk show host Sean Hannity. Their relationship has sparked criticism that the network has too close of a relationship with the White House.

Some conservatives have also warned Trump against hiring Shine.

Conservative legal activist Larry Klayman this week urged prosecutors to investigate Shine for alleged crimes that took place during his tenure at Fox, including efforts to silence Ailes's accusers.

"President Trump is not anti-women's rights, but he has been unfairly branded as such by the leftist media in a further attempt to harm his presidency and to try to drive him from office," Klayman said in a statement. "The president does not need unnecessary controversy at this time by naming Shine to as what is in effect a deputy of chief of staff in charge of communications and messaging."

Trump has long faced sexual harassment allegations from multiple women, all of which he has denied. The White House earlier this year faced widespread condemnation for its handling of abuse accusations against former staff secretary Rob Porter.

Trump Hires Former Fox News Executive Bill Shine As Communications Chief

By Matthew Nussbaum

[Politico](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump has hired former Fox News executive Bill Shine to lead his communications team, the White House announced on Thursday.

"He brings over two decades of television programming, communications, and management experience to the role," the White House said in a statement announcing the hire. Shine's official title will be assistant to the president and deputy chief of staff for communications.

Shine was forced out of Fox News in May 2017 over his handling of sexual harassment claims at the company. He will be the first official head of the White House communications department since longtime Trump aide Hope Hicks left the position in March.

Shine will be Trump's fifth communications chief, succeeding Hicks, Anthony Scaramucci, Sean Spicer — who also worked as press secretary — and Michael Dubke.

The addition of Shine further solidifies Fox News' relationship with the White House and also brings into the West Wing a target of the "Me Too" movement who could draw further attention to accusations by women against Trump.

Trump To Pull Tariff Trigger At Midnight In Trade-War Escalation

By Andrew Mayeda

[Bloomberg News](#), July 4, 2018

President Donald Trump is preparing to slap tariffs on Chinese goods early Friday, the first shot in a trade war between the world's two biggest economies.

Tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese goods are scheduled to take effect at 12:01 a.m. in Washington, the U.S. Trade Representative confirmed in an email Thursday. The milestone marks a new and damaging phase in a conflict that has roiled markets and cast a shadow over the global growth outlook.

In Beijing, policy makers are digging in for what could be a protracted fight — one in which they say they won't be the aggressor. Beijing has said retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods ranging from soybeans to pork will go into effect immediately after the U.S. acts.

With further tit-for-tat levies already threatened between the U.S. and China, some investors are concerned this week may mark the start of a trade war that spreads globally. Trump has already imposed tariffs on imported steel, aluminum, solar panels and washing machines.

As the deadline approached with little sign of a last-minute deal, U.S. stocks pared gains. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index rose 0.7 percent at 1:35 p.m. in New York, heading for the best gain in four weeks.

The looming tariffs have prompted central bank officials to try to reassure investors. The European Union has taken a firm stance ahead of the escalation, with Bank of England Governor Mark Carney saying that the rise of protectionism will affect trade flows and push up import costs.

"This is a dark day for economists. We've generally seen freer and freer trade since World War II, and now we seem to be reversing that," David Dollar, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington and a former U.S. Treasury attache in Beijing, said in a Bloomberg Television

interview on Thursday. "China is committed to retaliating proportionally."

Here's a rundown of the key facts about China's position in the conflict: What goods are to be targeted?

On June 15, Trump said the U.S. would begin charging additional duties of 25 percent on \$50 billion worth of Chinese imports in response to what he says is theft of American intellectual property. That's split into two rounds – \$34 billion on Friday and \$16 billion later.

China has said it will fight back with "equal scale, equal intensity." How will the tariffs be implemented?

Customs services for the U.S. and China will be responsible for collecting the new tariffs as imports pass through the port of entry. When products on the list for extra levies are declared to customs, the importer will pay the additional levies. Are markets ready?

Chinese stocks have taken a beating in recent weeks, entering a bear market, as concerns about the trade-war have mingled with worries about how an ongoing debt-control campaign will feed through into the outlook for economic growth.

People's Bank of China Party Chief Guo Shuqing sought to calm markets, saying bond market risks are controllable and the economy is capable of bearing the impacts of trade frictions. The economic fundamentals mean a sharp depreciation of the yuan is unlikely, he said in an interview with the Financial News.

U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said on June 20 that officials are beginning to hear that companies are postponing investment and hiring due to uncertainty about what comes next. "Changes in trade policy could cause us to have to question the outlook," he said during a panel talk in Portugal.

U.S. stocks have wobbled on trade frictions, but the S&P 500 Index remains roughly level from the start of the year. What can the real-world impact be?

The tariffs are already having an effect. As an example, Chinese companies are reselling U.S. soybeans, and Chinese companies are expected to cancel most of the remaining soybeans they have committed to buy from the U.S. in the year ending Aug. 31, once the extra tariffs take effect.

Some American business are bracing for impact. U.S. manufacturers and business groups have said the tariffs could increase their costs and lead to higher prices for consumers.

Still, data released Thursday show world growth isn't showing any signs of being dented. The JPMorgan-Markit global composite PMI rose to a four-month high of 54.2 in June.

"Although uncertainties have clearly increased this year and pose downside risks to growth, the latest batch of timely activity indicators suggests that in the shorter term the global

economy is resilient to these worries," Ben May, director of global macro research at Oxford Economics in London, said in a report on Thursday. "Business surveys point to a very positive investment outlook despite ongoing protectionism fears," May said.

— With assistance by Jeff Kearns, Jeanny Yu, Lee J Miller, Weiyi Qiu, Fielding Chen, Miao Han, Yinan Zhao, and David Westin

China Says US "Opening Fire" On World With Tariffs, Vows To Respond

By Elias Glenn

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

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Trump Says U.S. Tariffs Could Be Applied To Chinese Goods Worth \$500 Billion

By David Lawder

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

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Trade War With China Looms As Midnight Tariff Deadline Approaches

By Ana Swanson

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

WASHINGTON — President Trump's repeated threats to start a trade war with China appear headed for reality as the administration prepares to impose tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese products on Friday morning, setting up a potentially devastating clash between the world's two largest economies.

The penalties, which go into effect at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, are expected to prompt immediate retaliatory tariffs by Beijing, which has said it will tax an equal amount of American exports, including pork, soybeans, steel and peanuts. The dispute is expected to ripple through global supply chains, raise costs for businesses and consumers and roil global stock markets, which have been volatile in anticipation of a prolonged trade fight between the United States and almost everyone else.

The Trump administration is fighting trade spats on multiple fronts as it imposes tariffs on foreign steel, aluminum, solar panels and washing machines from countries like Canada, Mexico, the European Union and Japan. But the tariffs on China, the world's largest manufacturing hub, will affect a much larger share of products and a greater percentage of companies that rely on global supply chains, potentially hurting American companies more than Chinese firms.

By Friday morning, companies like Husco International, a Wisconsin-based manufacturing company that makes parts for companies like Ford, General Motors, Caterpillar and John Deere, will face a 25 percent increase on a variety of parts imported from China. Austin Ramirez, Husco International's chief executive, said that increase would immediately put him and other American manufacturers at a disadvantage to competitors abroad.

"The people it helps most of all are my competitors in Germany and Japan, who also have large parts of their supply chain in Asia but don't have these tariffs," he said.

If China responds with its own tariffs, as expected, it will join other countries that have also retaliated, bringing the total value of affected American exports to approximately \$75 billion by the end of the week. That is still a small fraction of the \$1.55 trillion of goods the United States exported last year, but in some industries the pain will be intense.

Research by Mary Lovely, an economics professor at Syracuse University and senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, suggests that non-Chinese multinational corporations operating in China will be the ones paying the price of the tariffs, not Chinese firms. For example, non-Chinese companies export 87 percent of computer and electronic products from China to the United States, while Chinese firms send only 13 percent, according to Ms. Lovely's research.

"I think you're going to see an effect on the longer-term view of the U.S. as a place to export," Ms. Lovely said. "These tariffs are not hitting the mark, and they're making it much harder for American firms to do business inside the United States, let alone export markets."

While the tariffs affect a relatively small share of trade, Ms. Lovely said the uncertainty that the Trump approach had created for companies could backfire on the administration, eroding the capacity of firms in the United States to export to China and other nations.

The Trump administration's aggressive stance toward China is aimed at pressuring the country to curtail what the White House describes as a pattern of unfair trade practices and theft of American intellectual property. The two countries had been in talks in which China proposed to reduce some barriers to foreign companies and increase its purchases of American products. But the Trump administration has said the pledges fell short, and formal negotiations have lapsed in recent months.

It is unclear how the trade war might end or whether it will end at all. As trade actions between Washington and Beijing escalate, it is growing harder for the countries' leaders to walk back from the brink.

Eswar Prasad, a professor of international trade at Cornell University, said the economic damage from a trade war seemed to have become a secondary issue for Mr.

Trump and President Xi Jinping of China, who have not backed down from talking tough on trade.

"The internal political dynamics in each country could make it difficult to contain or find an exit path from escalating trade hostilities," he said.

The Trump administration designed its tariff list to try to spare consumers, and many of the products that American families purchase from China, from flat-screen TVs to shoes, will not be hit on Friday. But in the process, the tariffs instead focus heavily on the kind of intermediate inputs and capital equipment that businesses purchase. Economists say that will raise costs for American industry, potentially threatening the manufacturing jobs that Mr. Trump has long said he wants to protect.

The trade spat will also reverse some of the gains that the Trump administration has negotiated with China in past months — including China's agreement to cut its 25 percent tariff on cars to 15 percent beginning July 1. Chinese officials have said they would impose a 25 percent tariff on American cars in response to the Trump administration's trade actions.

The United States also plans to impose a second round of tariffs on \$16 billion of Chinese products soon, another action China has said it would respond to in kind. In total, Mr. Trump has threatened tariffs on up to \$450 billion of Chinese products if Beijing refuses to capitulate.

Trump's Trade War With China Is Finally Here — And It Won't Be Pretty, Analysts Say

By Danielle Paquette And Emily Rauhala

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

BEIJING — Some said the day would never come, that it was all a bluff. But as the Independence Day fireworks cool in Washington, the eve of the trade war has arrived in China's capital, where government leaders keep reminding people: We did not start this, but we will fight back.

President Trump's first tariffs are scheduled to hit \$34 billion of Chinese imports on Friday, and Beijing plans to swiftly respond with levies on an equal amount of goods. Border officers here could receive the order as early as midnight to slap new taxes on hundreds of U.S. products, including pork, poultry, soybeans and corn.

And so would begin an unprecedented commerce battle between the world's two largest economies — a conflict analysts fear could rattle markets, cripple trade, and undermine ties between the United States and China at a time when the administration seeks Beijing's cooperation on North Korea.

As the global business community watches the clock, China is moving to pin the fallout on Trump, framing the United States as a bully the Asian nation is forced to confront. A state media editorial this week called the United States'

“dictatorial bent” a global threat, while officials said China will “absolutely not” take the first swing.

“The United States will be opening fire on the whole world and also opening fire on itself,” Gao Feng, a spokesman for the Chinese Commerce Ministry, said Thursday.

Those measures appear to be aimed at the United States’ heartland, which helped lift Trump into the White House. Farmers in the overwhelmingly red Midwest fear they will lose access to China’s lucrative market and be left with the bill for excess produce and livestock.

What happens next is anyone’s guess, analysts say, since both sides have pledged not to back down.

“It’s a dark day tomorrow for global trade,” predicted Jörg Wuttke, former president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China.

Uncertainty hangs over companies, supply chains and investment plans, he said. U.S. firms in China are already reporting spikes in random inspections at ports.

One U.S. manufacturer said Chinese authorities on average used to inspect 2 percent of the vehicles it sent abroad. Since June, agents have taken a closer look at every product.

“Don’t expect the ‘war’ to be out in the open in some imaginary tit-for-tat tariff battlefield,” said James Zimmerman, a partner in the Beijing office of international law firm Perkins Coie LLP. “The real battle will be on the flanks” — in the form of unnecessary inspections, product quarantines and heightened regulatory scrutiny.

Supply chains will also suffer a blow, said Cliff Tan, East Asian head of global markets research at Japan’s MUFG Bank in Hong Kong. The initial set of U.S. tariffs could rock companies in the technology sector and hike the price of “Walmart-type” products.

“It’s like a war where everybody points the guns at themselves,” Tan said.

The conflict over U.S.-China trade has been brewing for years but has intensified rapidly in 2018. On April 3, the United States released a list of targets for proposed tariffs on \$50 billion worth of Chinese imports, taking aim at high-tech and industrial goods. On April 4, China fired back.

In the months since, the tit for tat has escalated, with the U.S. threatening successive rounds of tariffs on goods valued at hundreds of billions of dollars. China vowed to match U.S. moves, using both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Kenneth Jarrett, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, said that a sense of anxiety has settled over business in the port city.

“My hope is that with this start, people will feel that the cost is too great and we will not move on to the second wave,” he said.

Thus far, the U.S. president has showed no interest in a last-minute truce. Though he has called Chinese President Xi Jinping a “good friend,” he has expressed no apprehension over what could happen in either country when the first tariffs land.

“Trade wars are good,” Trump recently tweeted, “and easy to win.”

Yang Liu contributed from Beijing.

China Rejects “Threats And Blackmail” On Eve Of U.S. Tariff Hike

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

China rejected “threats and blackmail” ahead of a threatened U.S. tariff hike, striking a defiant stance Thursday in a dispute companies worry could flare into a full-blown trade war and chill the global economy.

A government spokesman said Beijing will defend itself if President Trump goes ahead Friday with plans to raise duties on \$34 billion worth of Chinese goods in the escalating conflict over technology policy.

The dispute reflects foreign frustration with China’s state-led industrial development strategy, which Washington, Europe, Japan and other trading partners say hurt their companies and violate its market-opening commitments. Americans worry that rising Chinese technological prowess might erode U.S. industrial leadership and prosperity.

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s government has issued a list of U.S. goods for possible retaliation, but the Commerce Ministry said it will wait to see what Washington does.

“China will not bow in the face of threats and blackmail, nor will it be shaken in its resolve to defend global free trade,” ministry spokesman Gao Feng said at a news conference.

“China will never fire the first shot,” Gao said. “However, if the United States adopts taxation measures, China will be forced to fight back to defend the core interests of the nation and the interests of the people.”

Friday’s tariff hikes are the first stage in threatened U.S. increases on up to \$450 billion of imports from China over complaints Beijing steals or pressures foreign companies to hand over technology.

Xi’s government has expressed confidence China can hold out against U.S. pressure, but companies and investors are uneasy.

Trade worries are adding to anxiety over cooling economic growth and tighter lending controls that have hit real estate and other industries. The main Chinese stock market index has tumbled 12% over the past month.

Chinese exporters of tools, lighting and appliances say U.S. orders have shrunk as customers wait to see what will happen to prices.

Ningbo Top East Technology Co., which makes soldering irons in Ningbo, south of Shanghai, used to export

30% of its output to the United States, according to its general manager, Tong Feibing. He said American orders have fallen 30% to 50% compared with a year ago.

The company wants customers to split the cost of the tariff hike, but few are willing, Tong said.

"There is a chance the company will lose money and might go bankrupt," Tong said. "I will do whatever I can, including layoffs."

The ruling Communist Party has insisted on making changes at its own pace while sticking to a state-led industrial strategy seen as the path to prosperity and global influence. Officials in Beijing reject accusations of theft and say foreign companies have no obligation to hand over technology. But rules on auto manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and other industries require companies to operate through state-owned Chinese partners and share know-how with potential competitors or teach them how to develop their own.

Beijing has announced changes this year, including easing limits on foreign ownership in insurance and some other fields. But none directly addresses the complaints that are fueling its conflict with Washington.

The U.S. also has irked some of its closest allies by hiking import duties on steel, aluminum and autos from Europe, Japan, Canada and Mexico.

"The global trade conflict is at risk of a serious escalation," Adam Slater of Oxford Economics said in a report.

Tariffs imposed so far by all sides affect about \$60 billion in goods, or 0.3% of world trade, according to Slater. He said that would rise to a full 4% of the global total if Washington, Beijing and other governments follow through on tariff threats.

Forecasters say a full-blown conflict could knock up to 0.5% off global economic growth through 2020 if Washington and Beijing impose tariff hikes on \$250 billion worth of each other's goods.

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U.S. Will Shoot Itself In The Foot If It Pulls The Tariff Trigger, China Says

More than half of the Chinese goods targeted by the Trump administration are made by foreign companies—including American-owned enterprises

By Grace Zhu And Lin Zhu

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Tariffs? Time For A Plan B: 'Gobble Up Every Bit Of Material That I Can'

By Patricia Cohen

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

With tariffs driving up the price of stainless steel, the precision-part manufacturer Accu-Swiss in Oakdale, Calif., came up with a plan to save money: turn off the lights but keep the machines on.

"We are being hurt because of the cost increase," said Soheli Sareshwala, the company's owner and president. To squeeze more output from existing equipment, he is "running the machines in a lights-out operation." After his regular 10-person staff leaves for the day at 6 p.m., Mr. Sareshwala said, the plant is experimenting with slowing down the machines and letting them run unattended for four more hours.

As every business school student learns, developing plans to deal with disruptions — from a hurricane to a rail strike — is as much a part of managing a company as billing or making payroll. The gathering storm of trade sanctions and retaliatory moves is forcing executives to put those lessons to use.

The 25 percent tariff on steel and 10 percent tariff on aluminum that President Trump first threatened in March and put into effect in June precipitated a string of retaliatory tariffs from trading partners like China, Germany, Mexico and Canada. On Friday, the administration is placing tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese products, many of them used in American manufacturing, and China has threatened to respond with sanctions of its own.

The escalating trade war is forcing importers and exporters across the country, including apple growers in Washington, hog farmers in Minnesota and Harley-Davidson in Wisconsin, to depart from business as usual — either on the fly or according to a contingency blueprint.

Last week, the potential impact on American companies was thrust into sharp relief when General Motors warned that a new wave of tariffs under consideration by the administration could lead to "less investment, fewer jobs and lower wages" at G.M. While the company has not drafted specific contingency plans for job reductions, a spokeswoman said, such a move is "something that could happen."

For Mr. Sareshwala at Accu-Swiss, Plan B is already the new normal.

In his 19 years at the company, which produces parts for devices and machines used in the biomedical, food and semiconductor industries, he has dealt with a few unanticipated events, from the dot-com bust to the Great Recession. But until recently, it probably would have made more sense for him to plan for an earthquake at his San Joaquin Valley plant than a hefty tariff on his primary raw material.

"It is very ironic to prepare for this kind of contingency in the United States," he said.

Accu-Swiss doesn't use imported steel, but the tariffs have ratcheted up the demand for domestic steel, making it harder to find and afford. So far, Mr. Sureshswala said, his priority is delivering orders on time, regardless of the cost.

"I use a lot of stainless steel, so I'm still trying to gobble up every bit of material that I can and not worry about the dollars and cents," he said. That strategy may wipe out his single-digit profit margin or even bring on a loss, he said, but in the short term he would rather lose money than customers.

At the plant, in addition to the lights-out operation, Mr. Sureshswala has begun to stagger the starts of daytime shifts to stretch out the time in which operators are tending the machines.

Since the 2016 election, the president's declarations about his readiness to wage a trade war have prompted heavy users of steel — foreign and domestic — to look into alternative supply lines. But some businesses said their contingency plans had not anticipated the extent of the shortages and rapidity of price increases, which started months ago.

"In a few days, domestic companies raised prices on stainless steel anywhere from 15 to 25 percent," said Joe Carlson, president of Lakeside Manufacturing, a medical and food service equipment maker in Milwaukee with 175 employees. He is also president of the North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers, which represents more than 550 companies.

"I've been in this business 24 years, and I've seen price increases and tariffs," Mr. Carlson said, "but haven't seen this combination before."

Edward Farrer, director of purchasing at Principal Manufacturing in Broadview, Ill., which produces automobile parts, has felt the same effect. His company, which employs 330 people and has \$50 million in annual sales, is a purchaser of imported steel and has not been able to find a domestic alternative.

Even if one emerges, he said, "the tariffs have been a springboard for domestic producers to increase their price" — and those higher costs will put American companies like his at a disadvantage compared with foreign manufacturers. Moreover, he said, any change in Principal's suppliers would require customer approval, an exhaustive process that would cause significant delays.

Like thousands of others, his company has filed with the federal government for an exclusion from the tariffs, but has not yet heard back.

Principal — whose customers include automotive suppliers and other major companies in the United States and abroad — accounts for contingencies like unexpected price swings in its contracts. "We have agreement for the ups and downs of markets," Mr. Farrer said, "but the increases are so significant now, customers are pushing back. Some discussions are contentious."

"Delivery dates are not changing, and product must be on time," he said. "We are caught in the middle between politics, customers and steel producers."

John Ferriola, president of Nucor, the largest American steel maker, said growing demand — driven by tax cuts and a rollback in federal regulation — was primarily responsible for the price increases.

"Tariffs will result in some long-term price increases as excess, artificially low-cost foreign material is taken out of the market," he said, "but as steel buyers adjust to new supply chains and new domestic production comes online, we expect prices will normalize."

Mr. Trump has promised that the tariffs will protect jobs in the steel and aluminum industries (as well as safeguard national security). Several manufacturers, however, said they were skeptical that domestic steel and aluminum makers had the capacity to meet the increased demand any time soon, and worried that prices would continue to rise — and even threaten jobs at their own companies. Mr. Farrer has halted all hiring, leaving about 30 positions unfilled, and has canceled, at least for now, a major capital purchase, two large machine tools.

Mark Vaughn has similarly put a brake on hiring at his metal stamping plant in Nashville. As the year started, he planned to add five or six new machinists in \$28-an-hour jobs. His tax bill was going down, he had a fat backlog of orders, and one of his biggest clients, the Swedish appliance manufacturer Electrolux, was planning to invest \$250 million to modernize its nearby Springfield plant.

But when the administration dangled the prospect of tariffs, Electrolux announced that it was postponing the upgrade, citing concerns about rising steel prices. "This is a message to the administration," the company said in a statement.

Vaughn Manufacturing's backlog has dwindled, and Mr. Vaughn said he would probably have to revise price quotes he promised six months ago. Instead of expanding his work force, which he described as "very highly skilled," he is thinking of cutting five to 10 jobs out of his 50-person staff.

The first rule in his contingency plan, he said, is to "take care of what you got and not overexpand."

"We were probably in line for \$2 million to \$3 million worth of work" making cooktops for Electrolux, he explained. And as for the new tax cuts, he pointed out, "Tariffs are a tax, so they took that advantage right back out of there."

In Milwaukee, Mr. Carlson of Lakeside Manufacturing said he had contracts to get steel through the summer, but was worried about the fall. All the steel distributors, including his own, want to take care of their biggest customers first, he said. At the same time, the largest companies are hoarding as much steel as they can, making it tougher for smaller businesses to find alternatives.

Before the tariff threats, steel orders took six to eight weeks. Once the announcement was made in March, the wait time grew to eight to 12 weeks. "Now we don't know when we're going to get our orders filled," Mr. Carlson said. "We're hand-to-mouth."

Trump's Trade War Has Started. Who's Been Helped And Who's Been Hurt?

By Brittany Renee Mayes, Ted Mellnik, Kate Rabinowitz And Shelly Tan

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

In January, President Trump imposed tariffs on washing machines and solar panels, followed a few months later by steel and aluminum. On July 6, additional tariffs against Chinese products go into effect.

Administration officials say the import taxes are very small compared with the country's \$18 trillion economy and that they will boost domestic manufacturing and investment. Trump has urged patience as the trade war continues to escalate. But what are the impacts of the tariffs that have already gone into effect?

The 20 percent tariff on washing machines in January was a boon to Whirlpool Corp. The company had been losing market share to Korean manufacturers LG and Samsung and repeatedly petitioned the government for protection from competitors. The week its request was granted, Whirlpool saw its steepest week-long stock price rise in nearly two years, and shortly afterward LG announced it would be raising the price of its washing machines by 4 to 8 percent, or around \$50 per machine. Months later, American consumers began to feel this tariff fallout.

In April, the price of washing machines increased by 9 percent. The next month they increased by 6 percent. Both are the largest monthly price increases since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began collecting such data in 1977.

The price of solar panels has dropped dramatically over the years as technology advanced and imports ballooned. In June the average price was \$3.03 per watt, down 20 percent since 2015, according to solar marketplace EnergySage.

That price trend has severely challenged U.S. manufacturers such as Suniva and SolarWorld. The companies had petitioned the federal government for a tariff, and they are expected to benefit from the 30 percent solar tariff imposed in January. But there are few of these manufacturers in the United States, and an estimated 80 percent of solar panels sold here are imported, according to Vikram Aggarwal, CEO of EnergySage. The U.S. solar industry, however, is much larger than just manufacturing, and overall it is expected to be hurt by the tariffs. Those in the highly competitive solar installation businesses often have to accept lower profits and absorb price increases rather than passing them on to consumers, explaining why prices

continue to drop. Nearly 600 installation companies participated in EnergySage's 2017 Solar Installer Survey, which found that 62 percent favor gaining market share even at the expense of gross margins. As margins fall, so do the number of major solar installation projects. The solar tariff has already cost 8,000 construction jobs in projects, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association, which predicts those job losses could reach 23,000.

In March and June, the Trump administration significantly expanded its protectionist campaign and imposed tariffs of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum, which together account for about \$48 billion in imports. The tariffs, justified by an administration finding that the imports threatened national security, exempt only South Korea, Brazil, Argentina and Australia. Steel and aluminum prices jumped.

As in solar, the impact of the steel and aluminum tariffs divides companies and their workers into two camps: those who make the metals and gain tariff protection, and those who must buy the metals and pay higher prices.

Although steel and aluminum producers supported the tariffs overall, some expressed qualms about the tariff's expansive reach. The Aluminum Association said in a statement that it was disappointed the tariff was extended beyond countries like China to "additional vital trading partner countries." And the Steel Manufacturers Association supported exceptions for key allies such as Mexico and Canada.

With the tariffs, jobs in industries that make steel and aluminum jobs are projected to grow by more than 25,000 in the next three years, according to a study by Trade Partnership Worldwide. Companies have announced expansions. Dormant mills, such as the one in Mingo Junction, Ohio, are on the path to reopening.

But the same Trade Partnership report estimates that 16 U.S. jobs will be lost for every steel- or aluminum-producing job gained, totaling over 400,000 net lost jobs.

One factor for the projected loss is that there are 5.1 million jobs in manufacturing industries that stand to be hurt by higher steel and aluminum prices, according to a Brookings Institution analysis of Emsi data. That compares to 313,000 jobs in the industries that make the metals and will benefit from higher prices.

Higher steel and aluminum prices also could ripple across the economy, in higher costs for commercial construction, the building of roads and bridges, as well as for a wide variety of consumer products. Add to those the estimated impact of retaliation from U.S. trading partners, and the overall cost to the country's economy the steel and aluminum tariffs will be \$37 billion, according to the Trade Partnership.

Retaliations are the riskiest part of Trump's trade war. So far, seven countries and the European Union plan to

impose tariffs on approximately \$38 billion worth of U.S. exports. China has imposed retaliatory tariffs on products such as aluminum, pork and fruit. The E.U. has targeted products such as bourbon and motorcycles. Harley-Davidson, citing the E.U. tariffs, announced it would be moving some production of motorcycles offshore for its E.U. market.

The war is still escalating. New tariffs against Chinese goods kick in July 6, with retaliations from China expected the same day. (Although some U.S. companies believe they're already being targeted.) And the auto industry looms as the next big fight, with the Trump administration threatening new taxes on European vehicles and parts. But many Americans drive imported cars, and every vehicle assembled in the United States is built using at least 25 percent foreign parts, usually much more. This new tariff could have a bigger impact on consumers than all of the previous ones.

Will Trump's Splendid Little Trade War Live In Infamy?

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

THE FIRST ROUND of U.S. tariffs on China takes effect Friday: Will July 6, 2018, turn out to be a date that lives in economic infamy, like June 17, 1930, the day President Herbert Hoover signed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act?

By itself, Mr. Trump's opening salvo, a 25 percent tariff on 818 Chinese imports, worth \$34 billion a year, amounts to a rounding error as compared with the overall size of the U.S. and Chinese economies. Moreover, it's not inherently misguided to get tough with China over its relentless mercantilism, which has long disadvantaged U.S. businesses and which more recently took the form of a "Made in China 2025" policy that seeks dominance for the People's Republic in cutting-edge technology. Alas, Mr. Trump seems fixated on tariffs as a means to a far less legitimate, far less realistic (and far more simplistic) goal: reducing the merchandise trade deficit, which was \$376 billion last year, between the United States and China. He has already threatened to escalate U.S. tariffs to cover nearly all the goods the United States imports from China if he does not get his way.

There would be a better chance of success against China if Mr. Trump were working in concert with other countries, including the United States' traditional allies and trading partners with which the United States has long enjoyed relatively free trade: Canada, Mexico and the European Union. Instead, Mr. Trump is recklessly antagonizing them, suggesting that they deliberately exploit the United States and threatening to impose tariffs on imported cars in addition to steel and aluminum.

Mr. Trump does have leverage, in the sense that all of these countries depend far more on exports than the United States does. They are undoubtedly reluctant to do much

more in response to Mr. Trump's tariffs than impose reciprocal measures of their own, as long as there is any hope of negotiating a settlement. At a certain point, however, they may decide that tariffs are not a means to an end for the American president, but an end in themselves. And that may prompt them to give up on persuading the United States and to join forces against it instead.

Tariffs create all sorts of inefficiencies, unintended consequences and uncertainty, none of which is good for an interdependent global economy. In a way, though, these are the least of the worries that Mr. Trump's policies raise. More fundamental is his dishonest use of national security as a rationale for new trade barriers, even against allies such as Canada, and his equally false accusation that the World Trade Organization has been biased against the United States. By delegitimizing such alliances and institutions, all of them created under U.S. auspices in the postwar era to help prevent global economic competition from fueling international conflict, Mr. Trump takes U.S. foreign policy generally back to the Smoot-Hawley era. That was a time when trade wars were liable to turn into real wars, a lesson of history that Mr. Trump has obviously failed to learn.

There Isn't Much The Fed Can Do To Ease The Pain Of A Trade War

By Neil Irwin

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

Minutes from the last Fed meeting show concern over trade, but no hint that it would use interest rates to counter any economic damage.

When the top policymakers at the Federal Reserve met three weeks ago to set the course for monetary policy in the United States, they spent substantial time discussing the risks that a trade war posed to the economy, according to minutes of the meeting released Wednesday.

Most Fed officials at the table "noted that uncertainty and risks had intensified," and that tariffs and other trade measures "could have negative effects on business sentiment and investment spending." They reported that some of their business contacts "indicated that plans for capital spending had been scaled back or postponed as a result of uncertainty over trade policy."

What they didn't discuss, at least as far as one can tell from the newly published minutes, was any strategy for the Fed to come to the rescue if trade wars began to act as a meaningful drag on the overall economy. Indeed, at that meeting, Fed officials "generally judged that, with the economy already very strong" and inflation running at about 2 percent, "it would likely be appropriate to continue gradually raising" interest rates.

There was no hint in the minutes that the Fed intended to use its power over interest rates in reaction to rising economic risks from trade wars.

That reflects a particular economic challenge as the United States imposes tariffs on major trading partners and those partners retaliate with tariffs of their own — a cycle set to escalate with \$34 billion of Chinese imports to go into effect at midnight.

It's not just that a multi-front trade war could slow economic growth. It's that it would do so in a way the Fed would not be able to easily offset. The usual economic shock absorber is particularly ill-suited to a trade-induced slump.

That's because a trade war simultaneously risks pulling growth rates down while pushing prices up. Anything the Fed seeks to do to cushion the blow on one side of that equation would tend to make things worse on the other side. So if, for example, the Fed held off on further interest rate increases to cushion a slump in investment spending, it would be doing so just as inflation was accelerating above the 2 percent the Fed aims for.

Prices for washing machines, for example, have risen in recent months amid new tariffs on washing machine imports. Tariffs on steel and aluminum have already driven up domestic prices of the materials, which could flow through in the form of higher inflation even for American-made goods that use the metals.

"I think of this as a standard supply shock," said Tim Duy, an economist at the University of Oregon. "Tariffs are going to constrict the productive capacity of the United States, which means lower growth and higher prices. The Fed operates on the demand side. They don't have the right tools for dealing with it."

For the Fed, the nearest parallel may be an oil price shock caused by some geopolitical event, such as those that took place in the 1970s, or a food price spike caused by a drought. What those events have in common is that they are caused not by economic fundamentals — such as when oil prices rise because the global economy is booming — but by some external shock. They are bad for growth, yet inflationary.

In those cases, monetary policy orthodoxy tends to emphasize looking past a one-time bump in inflation caused by the shock, while paying more attention to whether higher prices — whether for oil or corn or aluminum — are leading people to expect continually rising prices. A couple of years ago, with the Fed struggling to achieve the 2 percent inflation level it targets and with prices consistently rising more slowly, that might have been welcome.

Now, though, the Fed is pretty much achieving its inflation goal already, and with the unemployment rate at a very low level by historical standards, there's reason to think higher prices may be on the way soon even before the impact of tariffs. In projections released at the mid-June policy

meeting, the median Fed official expected that inflation would be 2.1 percent this year and next.

That calculus could change if a trade war starts doing major damage to the financial system, such as by causing steep losses in stock and bond markets or by causing financial stress to banks. But while the stock market is down a bit in recent weeks as the war of words over trade has escalated, so far the pain from trade wars has been limited to specific companies and their workers and customers. It has not been a systemic crisis.

For the last 11 years, from the housing downturn in 2007 that turned into the global financial crisis in 2008 and a prolonged, sluggish expansion after that, the Fed's tools were reasonably well suited to the challenges that presented themselves. The central bank became even more central than usual to every economic discussion.

But this time, the economic risks are different, and if conflict over trade practices starts to cause damage to the broader economy, we shouldn't count on the Fed to bail us out.

The Fed's Tariff Warning

Minutes from the June meeting show growing worry over trade harm.

By The Editorial Board

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

President Trump Bashes Tester, Reviews His Own Greatest Hits

By HOLLY K. MICHELS

[Billings \(MT\) Gazette](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump wasted no time getting in his digs at U.S. Sen. Jon Tester at a rally at the fairgrounds here, just 80 miles south of Tester's hometown of Big Sandy.

"You deserve a senator who doesn't just talk like he's from Montana, you deserve a senator who votes like he's from Montana," Trump told the crowd of about 6,600, with about 2,000 more waiting outside.

Trump is in Montana to campaign on behalf of Republican state Auditor Matt Rosendale, seeking to unseat Tester, a Democrat running for his third term.

Trump addressed the crowd for more than an hour after it was warmed up with speeches from his son, Donald Trump Jr., and Montana Republicans U.S. Sen. Steve Daines, U.S. Rep. Greg Gianforte and Rosendale.

Tester is one of 10 Democrats being targeted by national conservative groups because he's running in a state Trump carried by more than 20 percent in 2016.

President Donald Trump waves from outside the door of Air Force One after arriving at Great Falls International Airport Thursday, July 5, 2018.

Tester is also in Trump's crosshairs over the controversy surrounding the president's first nominee to be secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Rear Admiral Ronny Jackson. Tester made public accusations by former service members who complained of inappropriate behavior by Jackson, who later pulled his name from nomination. Trump retaliated, saying Tester would have a price to pay.

Trump spent a chunk of time talking about that, saying "Jon Tester showed his true colors with his shameful, dishonest attacks on a great man, a friend of mine, a man that I said why don't you run the VA, you'd be great."

Trump told the crowd he had a "long but beautiful" report, implying it cleared Jackson. However, CBS News reported Wednesday that the Defense Department has said it has found enough information to investigate claims against Jackson.

"Jon Tester said things about him that were horrible and weren't true," Trump said. "And that's probably why I'm here, because I won Montana by so many points I don't have to come here."

In a speech that touched on Trump's past campaign victories, North Korea, Russia, tariffs, the media and military spending, Trump also spent time attacking Tester's voting record.

"A vote for Jon Tester is a vote for Chuck Schumer, Nancy Pelosi and the new leader of the Democrat party, Maxine Waters," Trump said. "Jon Tester voted no on tax cuts for Montana families, he voted no on cutting the estate tax, your death tax for your farms and farmers."

Rally attendees cheer at the front of the line Thursday while waiting for doors to open to the Trump Rally in Great Falls.

Thom Bridge, thom.bridge@helenair.com

Cole Allison, from Great Falls, was one of the first at one of three gates that opened at 10:30 a.m. The 29-year-old mill worker said he came to the rally to show his support for the president.

When asked about what Trump has done since taking office that he's liked, Allison said: "Everything, immigration. We have to get that wall built, he's taking care of business."

Rally attendees run to get in line before the Trump Rally in Great Falls Thursday.

Allison said, though, that he's heard from farmers about concerns with tariffs Trump has enacted, and retaliation by countries around the world. But he's taking a wait-and-see approach.

"You have to take the good with the bad," Allison said. "Some farmers aren't happy. But you can't start at the finish line."

Roxanna and Keith Lilienthal left Toston at 7 a.m. to get to the rally early. Keith Lilienthal, a veteran, said he's been frustrated with Tester's effort to reform the VA.

"We can't get anything done there," he said.

Tester held a listening session with agriculture producers and small businesses in Billings that started at the same time doors opened to the rally.

Roxanna and Keith Lilienthal of Toston wait in line Thursday before gates open to the Trump Rally in Great Falls.

6 a.m.: President Donald Trump is holding a rally Thursday in Great Falls, where thousands of Montanans are expected to hear the president throw his support behind Republican candidates on the ballot this fall.

Trump is coming to the Big Sky state for the first time as president to campaign for Republican state Auditor Matt Rosendale. Rosendale is running against Montana's senior U.S. senator Jon Tester, a Democrat seeking his third term. The race is expected to be expensive, closely watched nationally and to flood Montanans with political advertising through the summer and fall.

Tester is part of a group of 10 targeted Democrat senators up for re-election in states Trump won in the 2016 presidential election. Trump and national Republican groups are throwing their time and money behind Republicans in those states as part of an effort to pick up seats in the Senate, where Republicans hold a 51-49 majority. Democrats are seeking to capitalize on a "blue wave" of energy that's sprung up since Trump's election.

National pundits see Tester's seat as more safe than those of other targeted senators, but it's never a cakewalk for Democrats to win elections in Montana, a state that leans red. Tester, a farmer and former schoolteacher who served in the state Legislature, has never won a U.S. Senate race with more than 50 percent of the vote.

Tester moved into Trump's crosshairs in April. As ranking member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, Tester made public allegations of worrisome behavior by White House physician Ronny Jackson, whom Trump nominated to be secretary of veterans affairs.

While Jackson ended up pulling his name from consideration, Trump went on a rampage against Tester, first on Twitter and then on Fox News. The president said Tester would have a "big price to pay in Montana."

Tester has campaigned on 16 of his bills Trump has signed, many of which deal with issues at the VA.

Rosendale eagerly welcomes the visit from Trump, hoping it will give his campaign a boost. Rosendale emerged from a four-way GOP primary in May, getting 34 percent of the vote.

"We can't wait to welcome President Trump to Montana," Rosendale said in a statement after the visit was confirmed. "The president has made winning this race a top priority because we need to end Jon Tester's liberal obstruction and pass the Trump agenda."

Tester has downplayed the visit, saying he's invited Trump to come to Montana several times to better

understand issues in the state, but that Thursday's trip probably won't accomplish that.

"We're glad to hear President Trump is finally coming to Montana, after Jon has invited the administration several times to Montana to discuss topics important to Montanans," campaign spokesman Chris Meager said after the announcement.

"Unfortunately, it looks like this will turn out to be a partisan attack, rather than a real opportunity to discuss real issues facing Montanans — like better infrastructure, schools, holding the VA accountable or the Farm Bill."

At least 18 presidents have visited Montana in the past. Most recently, former President Barack Obama went to Belgrade in 2009. Former presidents George W. Bush came to Great Falls in 2005 and Billings in 2006; Bill Clinton came to Billings in 1995 and George H.W. Bush came to Helena in 1989 and Billings in 1990. Trump came to Billings as a candidate in 2016.

Trump Mocks Warren, Tester And #MeToo, But Praises Putin At Montana Rally

By Emily Cochrane

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump lobbed personal and derogatory attacks at two Democratic senators, mocked the #MeToo movement and vouched for President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia on Thursday during a freewheeling, raucous rally ostensibly intended to solidify support for Montana's Republican Senate candidate.

Taunting Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts, with a refusal to apologize for calling her "Pocahontas," Mr. Trump imagined a debate during which he would gently throw an ancestry testing kit at Ms. Warren to make her prove the Native American heritage she has controversially claimed.

"We are going to do it gently because we're the #MeToo generation, so we have to be very careful," the president said to scattered laughter, adding that he would donate \$1 million to charity if Ms. Warren followed through. Mr. Trump, who has faced accusations of sexual assault and harassment, announced earlier in the day that Bill Shine, who was ousted from Fox News over his handling of the network's harassment scandals, would take a position on his administration's communications staff.

Mr. Trump was in Montana, he unabashedly told the crowd, to settle a political score with Senator Jon Tester, a Democrat who is tangled in a tough re-election campaign with Matt Rosendale, the state auditor. The president blamed Mr. Tester for the failed nomination of Dr. Ronny L. Jackson as head of the Veterans Affairs Department because he raised concerns about Dr. Jackson's professional conduct.

"Jon Tester said things that were horrible and that weren't true," Mr. Trump said, even as he conceded that he had pushed a reluctant Dr. Jackson to accept the nomination and endure the confirmation process. "That's probably why I'm here. I won Montana by so many points, I don't have to come here."

The president criticized Mr. Tester's voting record, which included opposition to the Republican tax overhaul and Mr. Trump's judicial nominees, a critique later offset by his praise of "landmark" veterans legislation that Mr. Tester pushed for. But Mr. Trump eventually broadened his verbal assault to include a number of familiar Washington opponents: the news media ("75 percent of those people are downright dishonest"), his own Justice Department (Hillary Clinton "gets special treatment") and Representative Maxine Waters, Democrat of California (a "low I.Q. individual").

"Democrats want anarchy, they really do," Mr. Trump said, adding that he intentionally called the party "the Democrat Party" because "Democratic Party sounds too good."

"And they don't know who they're playing with, folks," he added.

As the crowd cheered and pounded on the bleachers during the roughly 70-minute speech at the Four Seasons Arena in Great Falls, Mr. Trump embellished on his favorite exaggerations and falsehoods, including his margin of victory in the Electoral College, the country's trade deficits and crowd size. He teased the announcement of his Supreme Court pick and a possible slogan for his 2020 campaign. He complained about negative coverage of his relationship with the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-Un, claiming that President Barack Obama "would have loved" to have had a meeting with Mr. Kim.

And he slammed critics who suggested that he was not prepared for his coming meeting with Mr. Putin in Finland, dismissing Mr. Putin's background as a head of Russia's intelligence service.

"Putin's fine," Mr. Trump said. "He's fine. We're all fine. We're people. Will I be prepared? Totally prepared. I've been preparing for this stuff my whole life."

"Getting along with Russia, and getting along with China and getting along with other countries is a good thing," he added, "not a bad thing."

The notion that the United States should get along with other countries did not appear, however, to extend to NATO, as Mr. Trump vowed to demand more payment from the countries in the alliance during a summit meeting next week.

"We're the schmucks that are paying for the whole thing," he said. "I'll see NATO and I'll tell NATO, 'You've got to start paying your bills.'"

There were notable caveats to Mr. Trump's riffs: He hailed his administration's deregulation push, but made no mention of his pre-rally announcement that Scott Pruitt would

resign as head of the Environmental Protection Agency. And while the president continued his public defense of his administration's immigration crackdown, he did not address the outcry surrounding the separation of migrant families at the southwestern border — something Ms. Warren pointed out on Twitter.

"While you obsess over my genes, your Admin is conducting DNA tests on little kids because you ripped them from their mamas & you are too incompetent to reunite them in time to meet a court order," she wrote. "Maybe you should focus on fixing the lives you're destroying."

Late in the rally, Mr. Trump pivoted to a condemnation of the National Football League's new national anthem policy — which requires players to stand or remain in the locker room ("that's worse than not standing") — before eventually returning to the reason for the rally: campaigning against an embattled Democrat in a state he won by a sizable margin.

"Get your ass out to vote," he said to the roaring crowd. "We will never, ever surrender. We will never, ever quit. We go forward to victory."

Trump Unleashes In Montana

The president lampoons Jon Tester, Elizabeth Warren, the media and more of his favorite targets at a stemwinding campaign-style rally.

By Matthew Nussbaum

[Politico](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump went on offense on Thursday at a campaign-style rally in Montana, deriding the state's Democratic senator but also launching attacks against the Justice Department, the media, Hillary Clinton, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, the "Me Too" movement and more.

He previewed themes he will highlight as he works to unseat Democratic senators in the coming midterm elections, while also returning to many of his favorite 2016 attacks.

"It's time to retire liberal Democrat Jon Tester," Trump declared to a raucous crowd during the hour-long address in Great Falls, Montana. "A vote for Jon Tester is a vote for Chuck Schumer, Nancy Pelosi and the new leader of the Democrat Party Maxine Waters."

Trump slammed Tester for voting against the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, voting against a major tax cuts bill and for voting no on legislation to ban late-term abortions.

"You wouldn't think he'd play very well out here. How did he get elected?" Trump wondered aloud. "You can right your wrong in November."

He also returned to scathing attacks on the news media just one week after a gunman killed five journalists at a Maryland newspaper.

He derided the press as "fake news," "bad people" and "so damn dishonest."

"They're fake," he said, pointing at the press area in the arena. "These are really bad people."

In a winding speech, Trump also accused the Justice Department of corruption, bragged about his 2016 election win, spoke about his upcoming meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and declared that Rep. Maxine Waters, a frequent Trump critic, has an IQ in the "60s."

He repeated, falsely, that he was the first Republican candidate to win Wisconsin since 1952 and repeated his unfounded conspiracy theory that there was extensive voter fraud during the 2016 election. He also mocked Warren at length, deriding Massachusetts Democratic senator as "Pocahontas" and saying he would get her to take a DNA test if she runs against him in 2020 — though he added derisively he would do it carefully because of the "Me Too era."

Warren hit back in a tweet, saying the Trump administration is "conducting DNA tests" on children separated from their families at the border.

The nearly hour-long address was the type of unscripted speech in which Trump delights, riling his base beneath banners reading "Promises Made, Promises Kept."

Trump carried the state by 20 points in 2016, but Republicans face a tough fight to unseat Tester in the state in 2018. Tester is facing off against Republican nominee Matt Rosendale, the state auditor and a former member of the state legislature.

Tester, the top Democrat on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, has been on the receiving end of personal barbs from Trump after he played a crucial role in sinking Trump's nominee for Veterans Affairs secretary, White House physician Ronny Jackson.

Trump spoke at length about the Jackson debacle, accusing Tester of "shameful, dishonest attacks on a great man."

The attacks were similar to those Trump made against Tester in the midst of the controversy.

"Allegations made by Senator Jon Tester against Admiral/Doctor Ron Jackson are proving false," Trump tweeted in April as damaging reports about Jackson were emerging. "The Secret Service is unable to confirm (in fact they deny) any of the phony Democrat charges which have absolutely devastated the wonderful Jackson family. Tester should resign."

"Tester should lose race in Montana. Very dishonest and sick!" Trump added on Twitter.

The invective does not seem to have bothered Tester, who took out full-page newspaper ads in the state Thursday that read "Welcome to Montana & Thank You President Trump," and listing "Jon's 16 bills signed into law by President Trump" — a clear attempt to show the state's Trump-friendly voters that the senator can work with the president.

Trump is scheduled to travel to his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, after the rally. He told reporters he will meet over the weekend with Vice President Mike Pence and staff ahead of Monday's planned announcement of his

Supreme Court nominee to fill the seat vacated by Justice Anthony Kennedy.

Montana GOP Senate Candidate Shares Spotlight With President

By Phil Drake

[Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#), July 5, 2018

For Matt Rosendale, who turns 58 on Saturday, Thursday's rally must have come across as an early birthday president.

President Donald J. Trump, along with sons Donald Jr. and Eric, flew into Great Falls to campaign for the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Democrat Sen. Jon Tester.

Thousands gathered at the Four Seasons Arena at Montana ExpoPark to see the president try to spark enthusiasm for Republican candidates Rosendale and House incumbent Rep. Greg Gianforte, in the Nov. 6 election.

TRUMP RALLY:

Rosendale made brief remarks at Thursday's rally.

"Do we have an incredible president or what?" he shouted to the crowd.

He said this president "fights each and every single day for this great nation."

Rosendale said Trump is fighting for seniors, people in the timber industry, farmers and ranchers.

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"And you know he is fighting for our miners down in Butte and our workers in ... Colstrip," he said.

"He's fighting for people across state who feel their voices are not being heard, including the unborn," Rosendale said.

"I will be that voice for you if you elect me to the United States senate," he said, adding he would stand with the president to make America great again.

"A vote for Jon Tester is a vote for Chuck Schumer, Nancy Pelosi and the new leader of the Democratic Party, Maxine Waters."

President Donald Trump

Rosendale said what is good for America is "great for Montana."

Trump said it was time to retire Tester and called Rosendale "a tough cookie." He said Tester sides with his party rather than Montana.

"A vote for Jon Tester is a vote for Chuck Schumer, Nancy Pelosi and the new leader of the Democratic Party, Maxine Waters," Trump said.

Chris Meagher, spokesman for the Tester campaign, said Tester works with either party to get things done.

"East Coast developer Matt Rosendale is only looking out for himself and whatever out-of-state special interest

group that is propping up his campaign with cash," Meagher said. "We can't trust him to defend Montana."

Trump's visit to Great Falls came hours after Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt resigned amid ethics investigations.

"How about that — to have a president in the state of Montana?" Rosendale said Thursday at the Roadhouse Diner in Great Falls. "But to campaign for me is incredible."

Rosendale drove up from Helena on Wednesday, then had lunch Thursday at the diner, which offered a "Commander in Beef" burger just for the presidential visit and to play off Trump's fondness for burgers.

"I'm a meat and potatoes kind of guy," Rosendale said. "I appreciate a good burger."

TRUMP RALLY:

From there he went to Great Falls International Airport to welcome Air Force One and the president to Montana. He was part of the motorcade to the arena.

Gravis Marketing released a poll in June that put Tester 9 points ahead of Rosendale.

Rosendale said Thursday that there is a "stark difference" between him and Tester.

Rosendale said he favored the recent tax reform pushed by the president and noted Tester voted against it. He also noted Tester's support for the Affordable Care Act, known commonly as "Obamacare," which Rosendale, like the president, opposes,

Montana Democrats noted Thursday that during the 2016 Republican presidential primary, Rosendale backed Sen. Ted Cruz.

Rosendale has lived in Montana since June 2002, having moved from Maryland where he was in real estate, real estate development and land management. He studied at Chesapeake College, Maryland, 1985.

He served as a member of the Montana Legislature from 2011 to 2017, representing the Glendive area. He served in the House from 2011-2013 and then was elected to the state Senate for the 2013 and 2015 sessions and served one session as majority leader.

TRUMP RALLY:

In July 2017, Rosendale announced that he would seek the Republican nomination to challenge Tester in the 2018 U.S. Senate election. Tester has played up his accomplishments as a senator who is effective for Montana, noting the Republican president has signed 16 of his bills.

On June 5, Rosendale won Montana's 2018 Republican U.S. Senate primary over candidates former Judge Russell Fagg, businessman and veteran Troy Downing and Dr. Albert Olszewski, who also serves as a member of the state senate.

Rosendale has listed supporters as Sens. Rand Paul of Kentucky, Ted Cruz of Texas and Mike Lee of Utah, and Trump's National Security Adviser John Bolton.

He and wife Jean have three sons, Matthew Jr., Brien and Adam. The family has a ranch north of Glendive.

Gianforte, a high-tech entrepreneur, is seeking re-election to what will be his first full term. He won a special election in 2017 to fill a seat vacated by GOP Rep. Ryan Zinke, who is now serving as Trump's secretary of the interior. Gianforte faces Democrat Kathleen Williams, a former state lawmaker.

"I am proud to serve with this great president but have more work to do," Gianforte said Thursday. "This great president has given this country hope again."

The Gravis Marketing poll gave Williams a 6-point lead over Gianforte.

In Montana, Trump Says 'Putin Is Fine' And Sticks By Threats To NATO

By Todd J. Gillman, Washington Bureau Chief
[Dallas Morning News](#), July 5, 2018

Ahead of summits with NATO and Russian strongman Vladimir Putin, President Donald Trump used a Montana campaign rally on Thursday to rail against Germany and to defend his "nice" approach to the former KGB spy – stances that conflicted with much tougher talk from his own emissaries to the western alliance and in Moscow.

Mimicking the carping about his supposedly naïve approach to Putin, he said, "'You know President Putin is KGB' and this and that. You know, Putin is fine. He's fine. We're all people. Will I be prepared? I've been preparing for this stuff all my life."

Trump arranged the rally to dish out political payback at a Democratic senator who has defied him and stymied a favorite cabinet pick but turned it into an opportunity to complain about NATO and the news media – "They're so damn dishonest," he said – and to dismiss catcalls from "stupid people, or for political people" about his approach to governing.

Hours earlier, Trump's ambassador to NATO, former Texas senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, called Russia one of the "major threats" facing the United States. And she struck a conciliatory tone toward the alliance. As a candidate, Trump called NATO "obsolete" and as president, he has repeatedly complained that some members don't pay as much as they've promised.

"Every one of our allies — 100 percent — are increasing defense spending," Hutchison said on a White House briefing call with reporters. "That is something that we will talk about as an achievement, but also that we need to do more."

The American military presence in Germany has been a cornerstone of U.S. security policy for decades. Trump hinted again on Thursday that he's willing to pull out. Such veiled threats have caused major concerns in European capitals.

From Moscow, U.S. ambassador Jon Huntsman — who likewise has been far more critical of Russian aggression than Trump — said on the same briefing call that Kremlin meddling in the U.S. election will be a central topic when Trump and Putin meet. Trump, he said, will have "eyes wide open" about Putin, and will "hold Russia accountable for its malign activities."

These were not Trump's talking points in Montana.

"I'll tell NATO, you got to start paying your bills," he told the cheering crowd. Complaining about trade deficits with Europe, he said, "on top of that, they kill us on NATO." The United States pays 4 percent of its GDP. Germany pays 1 percent, he said. "And I said you know Angela [Merkel], I can't guarantee it, but we're protecting you, and it means a lot more to you.... I don't know how much protection we get from protecting you."

Thursday's rally was putatively aimed at undermining Sen. Jon Tester, a Democrat seeking a third term in a state the president won by 20 percentage points.

Two months ago, Trump vowed to retaliate against Tester for derailing his nominee for Veterans Affairs secretary, Dr. Ronnie Jackson, by exposing allegations that as White House physician, Jackson overprescribed drugs, drank on the job and clashed often with coworkers.

"Jon Tester showed his true colors with his shameful dishonest attacks" on Jackson, "a friend of mine," Trump said in Great Falls. "The fake news said oh why isn't Trump getting a physical?... When he said I was healthy the news [media] was devastated."

Even without that impetus, Republicans are eager to replace Tester with Montana state auditor Matt Rosendale as they defend their 51-49 majority in November.

Rosendale has taken heat for painting himself as a hands-on rancher when he's been more an absentee investor, with an unmistakable Maryland accent that belies any claims of Western roots. Sen. Ted Cruz endorsed him in December.

"Matt Rosendale has fought hard to shrink government and preserve liberty," the Texan said in an ad released with the endorsement. "We need strong conservative reinforcements in the Senate."

The rally at Four Seasons Arena in Great Falls was Trump's first visit to Montana since a campaign visit to Billings in 2016, though he dispatched his son Donald Trump Jr. to the state GOP convention last month to give Rosendale a boost.

Don Jr. joined his father Thursday aboard Air Force One and warmed up the crowd in Great Falls with swipes at Hillary Clinton and the news media that set off chants of "fake news."

Full page ad placed by Democratic Sen. Jon Tester in 14 Montana newspapers on July 5, 2018, ahead of President

Trump's campaign rally in Great Falls, partly meant to undermine his reelection bid.

Trump has stepped up the pace of campaign rallies as the midterm elections loom. At a rally 10 days ago in West Columbia, S.C., he attacked the "fake news" media and dusted off one of his nastier epithets for professional journalists: "enemy of the people." Trump backers berated CNN reporter Jim Acosta, a regular Trump foil. Three days later, a gunman with a grudge against a small newspaper in Annapolis, Md., murdered five people in the newsroom. While his motives were unconnected with Trump's vitriol, critics were quick to note the president's hostility and denounce the tone he has set.

At a Fourth of July picnic for military families on the White House lawn on Wednesday, a man sneered at the small group of reporters assembled for the president's remarks, shouting "fake news" as other guests laughed.

Hundreds of Montanans lined streets, thrilled to see the president, but Trump also drew protesters. He passed one hand-drawn sign that read "FREE THOSE KIDS" — a reference to a controversial crackdown at the border that has led to more than 2,000 children being separated from parents for weeks at a time.

Don Jr. called the incumbent "two-faced Tester" for portraying himself as a hunter after going 15 years without a hunting license. Like his father, he played on resentment of mainstream news media. His own line of attack included an allegation that one major outlet misreported his hunt for prairie dogs.

"By the time The New York Times got hold of it we were shooting 'pregnant dogs.' That was your fake news media," the president's son said, sparking chants of "fake news."

President Trump complained about the press in a riff complaining about coverage of his summit in Singapore with North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un. The press, he insisted, has refused to give him credit for turning that rogue nation away from a path of nuclear aggression.

But all the news media would say, he complained, is that "they met."

"These guys — the crooked press. The fake news. They're the fake news," Trump said.

On Thursday, Tester bought full-page ads in 14 newspapers across the state touting the 16 bills he authored that Trump has signed into law — on veterans issues, government oversight and other issues--and making that case that while "Washington's a mess," he is successfully pushing Montana's interests, working "with anyone from any party."

"President Trump, I'll clear my schedule for whenever you are ready to sit down and talk about how we can get to work for Big Sky Country," the senator said in a statement.

Of the six most endangered Democratic senators seeking reelection this fall, Tester has been the most willing

to defy Trump, according to FiveThirtyEight — an independent streak that has endeared him to Montana voters and irritated the president.

Trump lashed out at him for opposing his immigration policies, his first Supreme Court nominee, Justice Neil Gorsuch, his travel ban, and his push for "enhanced vetting" of migrants and refugees from certain countries.

"A vote for Jon Tester is a vote for Chuck Schumer, Nancy Pelosi, and the new leader of the Democrat party, Maxine Waters," Trump said, as boos grew.

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that he has narrowed his search for a nominee to replace retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy to four, and will announce his pick on Monday night.

Trump Mocks Media At Montana Rally On Same Day Newsrooms Held Moment Of Silence For Slain Journalists

By Catherine Lucey And Matt Volz

[Chicago Tribune](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump mocked journalists for questioning his readiness for his upcoming summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin during a campaign rally in Montana, where he tried to boost the candidacy of Democratic Sen. Jon Tester's Republican challenger, state Auditor Matt Rosendale.

Trump vowed that he'll be prepared for the July 16 summit in Finland, saying "I've been preparing for this stuff my whole life." He adds that journalists questioning his readiness "don't say that."

Trump motioned to news media covering the Great Falls rally and said 75 percent "of those people are downright dishonest."

His barbs against the media came on a day when newsrooms across the U.S. held a moment of silence in remembrance of five Maryland newspaper staffers who were fatally shot last week by a man who authorities say held a grudge against the publication.

In a campaign stop that was both political and personal, Trump targeted Tester in a bid to get more Republicans elected to the Senate but also to punish the lawmaker he blames for derailing his nominee to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Appearing in a state he dominated in 2016, Trump cast Tester as a "liberal Democrat," railing against his voting record on issues like abortion, immigration and taxes. While Tester opposed Trump's first Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch, and the Republican tax bill, he also took flak from the left for a bill easing the rules on banks.

Tester tried to counter Trump's visit by taking out a full-page ad Thursday in more than a dozen newspapers across

the state thanking him for signing 16 bills the Democrat sponsored or co-sponsored.

Trump rallied in Great Falls to boost the candidacy of Tester's Republican challenger, state Auditor Matt Rosendale, who is seeking to deny Tester a third term and give Montana an all-Republican congressional delegation. The president has made the Montana race a priority as he hopes to help Republicans tighten the party's hold on the Senate. He welcomed Rosendale onto the stage, calling him a "very special person."

"You deserve a senator who doesn't just talk like he's from Montana. You deserve a senator who actually votes like he's from Montana," Trump said.

In the crowded arena, Trump made clear the campaign stop was personal as he lamented the failed nomination of White House physician Ronny Jackson to lead the VA. Trump blamed Tester for "shameful dishonest attacks on a great man, a friend of mine."

Tester is one of 10 Democrats running in states Trump won in 2016. Trump singled out Tester in April, saying the farmer from Big Sandy "will have a big price to pay" for releasing allegations against Jackson that included drunkenness, overprescribing medication and fostering a hostile work environment. Jackson denied the claims but withdrew his nomination. The Pentagon is investigating.

"Tester said things about him that were horrible and they weren't true," Trump said. "And that's probably why I'm here. Because I won Montana by so many points, I don't have to come here."

He repeated slams on key Democrats, including Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., a possible 2020 presidential challenger, and Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., who has called for Trump's impeachment for more than a year. And Trump also returned to the themes of his presidency, stressing his hard-line immigration policies, his support for law enforcement and his economic policies.

"If you want to protect your families and your community, then you have no choice," Trump said. "You have to vote for Republicans."

Trump launched a similar attack on Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., last week, labeling her a "liberal" though she is considered a moderate and one of the least reliably partisan Democratic votes in the Senate.

Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., received deafening applause as he opened his father's rally, quickly going on the attack against Tester and welcoming Montana Republicans Sen. Steve Daines and Rep. Greg Gianforte onto the stage.

Tester, in his ad, sought to undermine Trump's efforts to boost Rosendale by pointing out that he and the president agree on several issues.

"Welcome to Montana, and thank you President Trump for supporting Jon's legislation to help veterans and first

responders, hold the VA accountable, and get rid of waste, fraud and abuse in the federal government," the ad read.

The Tester campaign also planned a statewide radio ad campaign to run through the weekend touting his bills that Trump has signed.

Hundreds of people began lining up outside the arena a full eight hours before Trump was scheduled to speak. The number swelled to thousands by midday. Mechanic Shane Hegle said he drove 120 miles from his Cut Bank Home to be among the first in line.

Hegle said he voted for Tester in past elections but was undecided this time. Trump's message will influence his decision, he said.

"This is going to help a bunch," Hegle said. "I'll see what Trump has to say and how he delivers his magic words."

Montana is the latest stop on Trump's midterm campaign tour, designed to boost Republicans and advocate for his first 18 months in office. He is expected to travel throughout the summer.

Montana, which elects both Republicans and Democrats to statewide office, strongly supported Trump in the 2016 presidential election, leading both Senate candidates to compete for Trump supporters. Rosendale said he'll back Trump's agenda, while Tester said he'll support the president when it's in the state's interests and oppose him when it's not.

Tester planned to spend Thursday listening to farmers' and business owners' concerns about Trump's import tariffs, spokeswoman Marnee Banks said.

Trump Attacks 'Dishonest' Media At Montana Rally: 'These Are Really Bad People'

By Amy Russo

[Mediaite](#), July 5, 2018

Just one week after the Capital Gazette shooting in Annapolis, MD, President Donald Trump again publicly slammed the media, railing against reporters at his Montana rally Thursday night.

"I see the way they write," he told the crowd. "They're so damn dishonest. And I don't mean all of them. Because some of the finest people I know are journalists. Really. Hard to believe when I say that. I hate to say it but I have to say. But 75% of those people are downright dishonest. Downright dishonest."

But it didn't stop there. Trump continued his rant, recycling his claims of "fake news," rallying up his supporters by launching animosity toward the press.

"They're fake. They're fake," he said. "They quote sources. 'A source within the Trump organization said.' A source. They don't have a source. They never use names anymore. The old days, you have to use names. 'Jim Smith said that Donald Trump is a bad guy.' They don't do that

anymore. They say 'a source within the administration.' They make the sources up. They don't exist in many cases. I saw one of them said 15 anonymous sources. I don't have 15 people — forget it. 15 anonymous sources have said all source of stuff. These are really bad people."

The president was attending a campaign event in Great Falls to support Senate hopeful Matt Rosendale (R) who is up against the Democratic incumbent, Sen. Jon Tester, who's looking to keep his seat in November.

During the same rally, he also called the Statue of Liberty protester a "clown."

A Week After Capital Gazette Shooting, Trump Calls 75% Of Media 'Downright Dishonest'

By William Cummings

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

One week after the shooting at the Capital Gazette newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland, President Donald Trump put an end to any speculation that the tragedy could lead to a truce in his unrelenting war on the news media.

"Fake news. Bad people," Trump said, pointing at the news crews covering his rally Thursday in Great Falls, Montana, as the crowd went wild.

"I see the way they write. They're so damn dishonest," Trump said. "And I don't mean all of them, because some of the finest people I know are journalists really. Hard to believe when I say that. I hate to say it, but I have to say it. But 75 percent of those people are downright dishonest. Downright dishonest. They're fake. They're fake."

"They make the sources up. They don't exist in many cases," he continued. "These are really bad people."

Attacking the news media is nothing new for Trump. His well-chronicled criticism of reporters goes back to before the 2016 campaign and since becoming president he has attacked news outlets that he does not consider friendly as "fake news" and the "enemy of the American people."

Five people were killed on June 26 when a man with a long-running grudge against the Capital Gazette opened fire with a shotgun in the small paper's newsroom.

After the shooting Trump expressed condolences to the victims and their loved ones, leading to some to think that in the future he might temper his rhetoric against the media.

"Journalists, like all Americans, should be free from the fear of being violently attacked while doing their job," he said.

After initially declining to order flags to half-staff to honor the victims of the shooting, Trump reversed his decision Tuesday amid criticism.

"Is there a cutoff for tragedy?" Annapolis Mayor Gavin Buckley told the Capital Gazette. "This was an attack on the press. It was an attack on freedom of speech. It's just as important as any other tragedy."

Trump faces flag dilemma: When should it be lowered to half-staff?

Trump On ICE: 'They Protect Us And We Protect Them'

By Saagar Enjeti

[Daily Caller](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump criticized Democratic lawmakers for calling for the abolition of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, in a Thursday rally.

"The Democrats want open borders which means lots of crime. We want tough, strong powerful borders, and we want no crime and we're going to protect ICE. We protect ICE. They protect us and we protect them," Trump declared, repeating, "they protect us and we protect them."

The White House released a lengthy defense of ICE Thursday saying "abolishing ICE would mean open borders because it would eliminate the agency responsible for removing people who enter or remain in our country illegally, including drug dealers; gang members; and child molesters, rapists, and other sex offenders."

"Abolishing ICE would allow dangerous criminal aliens—including violent and ruthless members of the MS-13 gang—to remain in American communities and inflict terrible harm on innocent American men, women, and children," the White House continued.

Trump Mocks #MeToo Movement In Montana Rally

By Felicia Sonmez

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump joked about the #MeToo movement on Thursday, making light of the international campaign against sexual assault during a wide-ranging speech in which he also took aim at a potential 2020 White House opponent, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.).

At a rally in Great Falls, Mont., Trump deployed his familiar nickname of "Pocahontas" for Warren, which he has repeatedly used to mock the Massachusetts Democrat for her claims of Native American ancestry.

Trump imagined himself sparring with Warren on the debate stage and told the crowd that he would toss her a DNA kit, "but we have to do it gently, because we're in the #MeToo generation, so we have to be very gentle."

He then made a throwing motion and said that "we will very gently take that kit and we will slowly toss it, hoping it doesn't hit her and injure her arm."

The #MeToo movement gained steam late last year following revelations about decades of sexual abuse allegations against film producer Harvey Weinstein. It has since led to the downfall of dozens of powerful men across a broad range of industries.

Trump's quip comes on the same day that the White House announced the hiring of former Fox News Channel executive Bill Shine, who was ousted from the network last year in the wake of lawsuits suggesting that he ignored alleged sexual harassment by Fox's late chairman and chief executive, Roger Ailes.

More than a dozen women have accused Trump of sexual assault or improper conduct. Trump has denied all of the allegations against him.

Warren shot back at Trump on Twitter Thursday night by criticizing his administration's "zero tolerance" immigration policy, which has resulted in the separation of thousands of migrant children from their parents.

"Hey, @realDonaldTrump: While you obsess over my genes, your Admin is conducting DNA tests on little kids because you ripped them from their mamas & you are too incompetent to reunite them in time to meet a court order," Warren said. "Maybe you should focus on fixing the lives you're destroying."

Trump also used his Montana speech to deride Rep. Maxine Waters, the veteran Democratic lawmaker from California whose call for aggressive protests against Trump administration officials drew the president's ire last month.

Trump mentioned his previous attacks on Waters as a "low IQ individual" and added what appeared to be his own personal assessment, telling the crowd, "I mean, honestly, she's somewhere in the mid-60s, I believe."

A Waters spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump Mocks Elizabeth Warren, The '#MeToo Generation'

By Chris Perez

[New York Post](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump on Tuesday said that if he were to ever debate Sen. Elizabeth Warren, he'd have to subject her to an ancestry test — but he'd do it "very gently" though, seeing how we're in the #MeToo generation.

"Let's say I'm debating Pocahontas," Trump explained, referencing his notorious nickname for Warren while speaking at a rally in Great Falls, Montana.

"I promise you I'll do this: I will take, you know, those little [ancestry] kits they sell on television for \$2...I'm going to get one of those little kits, and in the middle of the debate, when she proclaims that she is of Indian heritage because her mother said she has high cheekbones — that's her only evidence, that her mother said she had high cheekbones — we will take that little kit...and we will slowly toss it, hoping it doesn't hit her and injure her arm, even though it only weighs probably two ounces."

Trump added, "But we have to do it gently, because we're in the #MeToo generation — so we have to be very

gentle...And we will say, 'I will give you \$1 million to your favorite charity, paid for by Trump, if you take the test and it shows you're an Indian.' And we'll see what she does. I have a feeling she will say no, but we will hold it for the debates."

Trump has been referring to Warren as Pocahontas since at least 2016 and has regularly questioned whether she's Native American, as she's claimed. He joked Thursday during the Montana rally that he would apologize to Pocahontas for giving Warren the nickname, but not the senator herself.

"Pocahontas, I apologize to you," Trump said. "To the fake Pocahontas, I won't."

Trump Says He'd Give Senator Elizabeth Warren \$1m For Charity If She Can Prove She's Native American

By Jaclyn Reiss

[Boston Globe](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump joked Thursday night that he would give Senator Elizabeth Warren \$1 million to a charity of her choice if she took a DNA test and it proved that she has Native American roots.

Trump made the comments during a rally in Montana, at which he spoke at length about the Massachusetts Democrat, calling her his favorite politically incorrect nickname — "Pocahontas" — and chiding her about her undocumented claims of Cherokee heritage.

"Pocahontas — they always want me to apologize for saying it. And I want to apologize. I'll use tonight: Pocahontas, I apologize to you," Trump said, as some supporters in the audience laughed. "To you, I apologize. To the fake Pocahontas, I won't apologize."

Warren has not backed off her claims and has even forcefully defended them: In February, she told the National Congress of American Indians that her mother's family was part Native American.

"The story they lived will always be a part of me," she then said, as tears came to her eyes. "And no one — not even the president of the United States — will ever take that part of me away." Related Links Warren defends claims of Native American heritage

Elizabeth Warren blasted President Trump's derogatory nickname for her but did not apologize for her claims that her mother's family had Cherokee blood.

However, that hasn't stopped Trump from taking up the issue publicly, including at Thursday's rally.

"Let's say I'm debating Pocahontas, right?" Trump said Thursday night. "I'm going to get one of those little kits, and in middle of the debate, when she proclaims that she is of Indian heritage — because her mother said that she has high cheekbones; that's her only evidence, that her mother said she has high cheekbones — we will take that little kit, and we

will say — but we have to do it gently because we're in the 'Me Too' generation, so we have to be very gentle — and we will very gently take that kit, and we will slowly toss it, hoping it doesn't hit her and injure her arm, even though it probably only weighs 2 ounces.

"And we will say, 'I will give you \$1 million to your favorite charity, paid for by Trump, if you take the test and it shows you're an Indian,' " Trump said, to cheers and applause from the audience. "And let's see what she does, right? I have a feeling she will say no. But we'll hold that for the debates."

Warren responded to the president in a strongly worded tweet, tying his japes about her ancestry to his administration's highly controversial separations of immigrant parents and children who have entered the country illegally.

Donald Trump Makes Light Of #MeToo Movement In Great Falls Rally Speech

By Sarah Dettmer

[Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#), July 5, 2018

In the hours after President Donald Trump concluded his speech at the Make America Great Again rally in Great Falls, the internet has ignited with comments about the president's more inflammatory remarks.

Trump didn't hold back his opinions on Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., but it was his jabs against Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and the #MeToo movement that have people tweeting.

During his speech, Trump fantasized about debating Warren and getting her to take a genealogy test. The president has often referred to Warren as 'Pocahontas', a jab against the senator claiming to be part Native American.

TRUMP RALLY:

"I'm going to get one of those little kits and in the middle of the debate when she proclaims she's of Indian heritage because her mother said she has high cheekbones," Trump said during his speech as the crowd of more than 6,500 people in Four Seasons Arena cheered and laughed.

"We will take that little kit and say—and we have to do it gently because we're in the Me Too generation, so we have to be very gentle— and we will very gently take that kit and we will slowly toss it, hoping it doesn't hit her and injure her arm even though it probably only weighs two ounces. And we will say, 'I will give you a million dollars to your favorite charity paid for by Trump if you take the test and it shows you're an Indian.'"

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The Me Too generation refers to the recent reckoning against all kinds of sexual assault. The movement has urged the downfall of notable figures such as Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey and Bill O'Reilly.

"She of the great tribal heritage—what tribe is it?" Trump said during his speech. "Uh, Let me think about it. In the meantime, she's based her life on being a minority. Pocahontas. They always want me to apologize for saying it and I hereby—oh no, I want to apologize and I'll use tonight."

TRUMP RALLY:

The crowd booed and yelled out 'No!' as Trump talked about apologizing. Then, thunderous applause as he hit his punchline.

"Pocahontas, I apologize to you. I apologize. To you, I apologize. To the fake Pocahontas, I won't apologize."

Tester Seemed Unconcerned About Trump's Presence In Great Falls, MT

By David Murray

[Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#), July 5, 2018

Sen. Jon Tester came to Billings for a listening session, but it wasn't to listen to criticisms levied against his congressional voting record or to the endorsements proffered by President Donald Trump in support of Republican candidate Matt Rosendale.

For Montana's two-term Democratic senator, it was business as usual on Thursday, despite the fact that the first sitting president to visit Montana in 13 years was little more than 200 miles away knocking down Tester's qualifications to continue representing Treasure State values in the U.S. Senate.

Dressed in a light blue shirt and casual work pants, Tester seemed unconcerned about Trump's presence in Montana, choosing to focus on trade issues rather than react to Trump's visit or the candidacy of his Republican rival.

"If things work out, and I'm able to speed home, I'm hoping to be able to be on a tractor to be able to get done plowing my peas down," Tester responded when asked if he planned to listen to the president's address. "I guess if it's on the radio, I could listen to it, but we'll see."

Tester is one of five Democratic senators running for re-election this year who are coming from states that voted for Trump by more than a double-digit margin.

These five Democratic senators, Tester, Heidi Heitkamp from North Dakota, Joe Manchin from West Virginia, Joe Donnelly from Indiana and Claire McCaskill from Missouri, could be the deciding margin over whether Republicans maintain a majority in the Senate. And thus a state like Montana, which is typically an afterthought during U.S. midterm elections, has risen to position of prominence that has warranted the summer visit by the president.

Early in his re-election bid, Tester emphasized his willingness to reach across the aisle and work effectively with Trump. On Thursday, he repeated his assertion that Trump has signed into law 13 bills Tester has endorsed, a majority of them dealing with improved services for U.S. veterans.

However, this uneasy alliance was strained last April, when Tester took the national stage in opposing Trump's nominee for Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Admiral Ronny Jackson. Jackson withdrew as a candidate on April 26 following allegations that he was loose with pain medications, was intoxicated during an overseas trip and had created a toxic work environment.

The president responded via Twitter at the time, calling on Tester to resign from the senate and suggesting the Tester "might have a big price to pay in Montana" for opposing Jackson's nomination.

On Thursday, Tester avoided resurrecting the confrontation, choosing instead to focus on the trade issues he came to Billings to hear about in the first place.

"The whole point of this meeting today is to be able to take a Montana perspective back to Washington D.C. and tell folks exactly what I'm hearing on the ground here in Montana from folks in agriculture and folks in business," Tester said.

That commitment to stay on topic did not preclude a backhanded swipe at the president's tough stance on tariffs, which threatens to open a trade war between the United States and some of its closest trading partners.

"A lot of the things that are happening now could end up being really devastating in the future," the senator added. "For instance, if they start building infrastructure toward other countries other than the U.S., that could have some long-term impacts that won't be turned around by just an eraser on a pencil or a different perspective on policy."

Asked if he believed Trump would take back some new perspectives on Montana following his visit there, Tester stayed close to a nonconfrontational line.

"I really hope so," he said. "I hope he gets a perspective of what's going on in rural Montana. He's got a real opportunity. He's going to be in Great Falls to see the veterans' clinic there and see the shortages we have in manpower at our vets' clinics. We've got a chance, if he wanted to, to run up north 100 miles and see the challenges we have on the northern border. The southern border gets a lot of press and a lot of attention, but the truth is we have a lot of challenges on the northern border too. He's got an opportunity with some of the infrastructure challenges we have in the state whether that's roads and bridges or things like broadband, which is going to be incredibly important for our 21st century economy."

"Hopefully he'll have some time to do some of that stuff and take that perspective back," Tester added. "Time will tell. We'll know 24 hours from now."

Trump Gets 'Welcome' From Montana Senator He Is Opposing

By Matt Volz

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — U.S. Sen. Jon Tester gave President Donald Trump a tongue-in-cheek welcome to Montana on Thursday by taking out a full-page ad in more than a dozen newspapers thanking him for signing 16 bills the Democrat sponsored or co-sponsored.

Trump was scheduled to hold a rally in the city of Great Falls to campaign for Tester's Republican challenger, State Auditor Matt Rosendale. The president has made the Montana Senate race a priority after he blamed Tester for derailing the nomination of his Veterans Affairs nominee, White House physician Ronny Jackson.

Tester's ad, which ran in the Great Falls Tribune and in newspapers across rural northern and eastern Montana, sought to undermine the president's efforts to boost Rosendale by pointing out that he and the president agree on several issues.

"Welcome to Montana, and thank you President Trump for supporting Jon's legislation to help veterans and first responders, hold the VA accountable, and get rid of waste, fraud and abuse in the federal government," the ad read.

The Tester campaign also planned a statewide radio ad campaign to run through the weekend touting his bills that Trump has signed.

The National Republican Senatorial Committee in a statement called Tester's ads a "pitiful" effort to paint himself as a Trump ally before the rally.

Tester is one of 10 Senate Democrats running for re-election in states that Trump won in the 2016 election. Trump singled out Tester in April, saying the farmer from Big Sandy "will have a big price to pay" for releasing allegations against VA nominee Jackson that included drunkenness, overprescribing medication and fostering a hostile work environment. Jackson denied the claims but withdrew his nomination.

Montana is the latest stop on Trump's midterm campaign tour, designed to boost Republicans as well as tout his first 18 months in office. He recently made a similar trip to North Dakota and is expected to keep traveling throughout the summer.

In Great Falls, Trump planned to promote his record on the economy and national security, said a person familiar with the president's plans, adding that Trump would stress his recent moves on immigration and foreign policy as well as the low unemployment rate. The person was not authorized to discuss the plans publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The president also was expected to paint Tester as an "obstructionist" and embrace Rosendale as a better fit for the state that he won by 20 points.

The visit comes less than two weeks after his eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., campaigned for Rosendale in the city of Billings.

Rosendale, who is seeking to deny Tester a third term and give Montana an all-Republican congressional delegation, said Trump has focused on the race because of Tester's "liberal obstruction."

Montana, a purple state that elects both Republicans and Democrats to statewide offices, strongly supported Trump in the 2016 election, leading both candidates to compete for Trump supporters. Rosendale said he'll back Trump's agenda, while Tester said he'll support the president when it's in the state's interests and oppose him when it's not.

Tester planned to spend Thursday listening to farmers' and business owners' concerns about Trump's import tariffs and was expected to be driving back to his farm when the president spoke, spokeswoman Marnee Banks said.

Associated Press writer Catherine Lucey in Washington contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that Jackson was not Trump's first Veterans Affairs nominee.

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Sen. Jon Tester Takes Out Newspaper Ads Welcoming Trump To Montana Ahead Of A Hostile Visit

By John Wagner

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

Girding for a hostile visit to his state from President Trump, Democratic Sen. Jon Tester took out full-page newspaper ads Thursday welcoming the commander in chief to Montana and thanking him for signing 16 bills that Tester had pushed.

Trump is scheduled to appear at a rally Thursday afternoon in Great Falls, where he hopes to give a boost to Tester's Republican challenger, State Auditor Matt Rosendale.

Montana is one of a handful of states that Trump won by a large margin in 2016 and that Republicans see as targets to pick up Senate seats this fall.

The president has trained his sights on Tester, in particular, saying he would "have a big price to pay" for his role in sinking Trump's nomination of Ronny L. Jackson to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs in April.

In Great Falls, MT @SenatorTester welcomes @realDonaldTrump with a full-page newspaper ad touting 16 Tester bills Trump has signed into law pic.twitter.com/bP801OVXgX— Garrett Haake (@GarrettHaake) July 5, 2018

In his role as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Tester released a list of

allegations that created a portrait of a long history of professional misconduct by Jackson. Those included claims that Jackson had a "pattern" of distributing medication with no patient history and that he crashed a government vehicle while intoxicated after a Secret Service going-away party.

Trump continued to defend Jackson, a rear admiral in the Navy and longtime White House physician, after he withdrew his nomination. And several pro-Trump groups have launched television and digital ads targeting Tester, including one that branded him a "disgrace."

[Pro-Trump groups air ads against Montana's Tester for questions that derailed VA pick]

The inspector general of the Department of Defense has since opened an investigation into the allegations against Jackson.

Tester's ad, which ran in a dozen newspapers, highlights legislation related to veterans affairs and other issues on which the senator and Trump have worked together.

"Welcome to Montana & THANK YOU PRESIDENT TRUMP for supporting Jon's legislation to help veterans, hold the VA accountable, and get rid of waste, fraud and abuse in the federal government," the ad reads.

It also features a picture of the two-term senator with a large smile.

"Washington's a mess — but that's not stopping Jon from getting things done for Montana," the ad says.

Radio ads with a similar message are also airing.

Trump's visit to Montana comes less than two weeks after his eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., campaigned there for Rosendale.

During a rally in Billings, Trump Jr. sought to portray Tester as out of touch with the state's voters.

"I'm the son of a billionaire from New York City, and I have much more of a Montana platform than . . . the senior senator from this state," Trump Jr. said. "That doesn't make much sense."

Trump won Montana by more than 20 percentage points over Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election. Tester won reelection in 2012, besting his Republican opponent by just four percentage points.

President Trump Narrows Supreme Court Search, Focuses On Three Judges

By David Jackson

[USA Today](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump is zeroing in on a historic choice for the Supreme Court by focusing on at least three solidly conservative federal appeals court judges: Brett Kavanaugh, Raymond Kethledge and Amy Coney Barrett, people familiar with the process said Thursday.

"I think I have it down to four people and I think of the four people, I have it down to three or two," Trump said during a flight to Great Falls, Montana. "I think they're all outstanding. Honestly, I could pick any of the 25 and they would be terrific."

Amid fierce lobbying by groups aligned with the different candidates, the president prepared to decamp to his Bedminster, N.J., golf resort later Thursday to make his final decision, according to people familiar with the search who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly on the selection process.

The president finished the interview process this week for the seat being vacated by retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy the sources said, but it remained possible he might talk by phone with one or more candidates over the weekend if he feels he needs more information.

Asked if any of the contenders would visit Bedminster this weekend, Trump said: "I was thinking about it. I doubt it. Unlikely."

Even as the focus narrowed Thursday to the three apparent finalists from Trump's list of 25, one source said the possibility of a wild-card nominee cannot be discounted. Among those still under consideration is Judge Amul Thapar, named by Trump last year to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. He is supported by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.

Vice President Pence and other aides will join him in New Jersey this weekend, Trump said, and he will probably "have a decision made in my mind by Sunday. We'll announce it on Monday."

Meanwhile, supporters of the various contenders lobbied heavily on Thursday, as they have all week, making phone calls to White House officials and penning newspaper opinion pieces.

The jockeying has served as a preview of things to come once a nominee is announced. Then, liberal and conservative groups will spend tens of millions of dollars on the airwaves in hopes of influencing key senators.

The White House is planning an elaborate, prime-time announcement Monday night to rival the one in which Trump unveiled his first nominee, Justice Neil Gorsuch, just 11 days into his presidency last January.

More: Supreme Court nominee short list features candidates President Trump likes for different reasons

More: Justice Anthony Kennedy to retire, opening Supreme Court seat for President Trump

Kavanaugh and Kethledge are seen as favorites, if only because Trump is asking more questions about them, sources said.

Kavanaugh, 53, enjoys the backing of conservative legal and political activists who have fought previous confirmation battles in the Senate. They see the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit judge as the most

reliable choice because he's written hundreds of opinions after 12 years on the bench.

But some Trump supporters oppose him, in part because he worked at the White House under George W. Bush, viewed as a traditional rather than an insurgent president in the Trump mold. In addition, Kavanaugh has written opinions on abortion and health care that some conservatives view as too compromising.

Many evangelical activists, who represent a crucial part of Trump's political base, favor Barrett. They cite her performance last fall during a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit confirmation battle in which her deep Catholic faith became an issue for some Democrats, led by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif.

But proponents of Kavanaugh and Kethledge say she lacks the experience for a Supreme Court job. Barrett, 46, has served on the Chicago-based court only since November.

Kethledge, 51, impressed Trump during his interview, officials said, but he is not as well-known as the other two candidates. An avid fisherman and hunter, he is known in part for his vivid writing style, which he practices from a remote cabin near Lake Huron that lacks Internet access.

Kennedy, who turns 82 this month, held the most important seat on the court for more than a decade: He was the swing vote on issues ranging from abortion and affirmative action to gay rights and capital punishment, often siding with the court's more liberal justices. His departure will leave a hole in the middle of the court that Republicans are eager to fill with a more reliable conservative.

Republicans are confident they have the votes to confirm anyone Trump chooses, given the party's majority in the Senate and the possibility of picking up votes of Democratic senators from states that heavily favored Trump in 2016.

The traditional 60-vote threshold for high court nominees was abolished last April when Democrats threatened to block Gorsuch's confirmation. That led McConnell to push through a rules change allowing justices to be confirmed with simple majority votes.

The battle is likely to play out over the next three months. Republicans hope to fill Kennedy's seat before the court's 2018 term begins in October, and well in advance of the November elections. But Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, has said that timetable may prove overly optimistic.

Trump Closes In On Supreme Court Pick; 3 Judges Top List

By Catherine Lucey And Lisa Mascaro

[Associated Press](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump is moving closer to deciding his next Supreme Court nominee amid intense jockeying from various factions seeking to influence his choice to replace retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy.

Trump's current top contenders are federal appeals court judges Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh and Raymond Kethledge, said a person familiar with Trump's thinking who was not authorized to speak publicly.

With customary fanfare, Trump plans to announce his selection Monday night. But as he builds suspense for his second court pick in two years — a nominee who could tip the balance toward conservatives and revisit landmark rulings on abortion access, gay marriage and other issues — momentum is also growing among GOP supporters and detractors of the top contenders.

Conservatives and some libertarian-leaning Republicans, including Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, have raised concerns about Kavanaugh, warning he could disappoint Republicans if his past decisions are a guide.

To counter that, Kavanaugh's allies have begun pushing back, reaching out to influential Republicans to ward off potential criticisms, according to one conservative who was the recipient of such outreach and spoke on condition of anonymity Thursday to discuss the situation.

With the Senate narrowly divided, 51-49, in favor of Republicans, Trump's announcement will launch a contentious confirmation process as Republicans seek to shift the court to the right and Democrats strive to block the effort.

Tapping into Trump's understanding of the importance of the choice, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., told the president this week that nominating someone hostile to abortion access, or the 2010 health care law, would tarnish his legacy.

Schumer told Trump that such a choice would be "cataclysmic" and create more division than the country has seen in years, according to a person familiar with the conversation who said Trump called Schumer on Tuesday.

The senator also told the president he could unify the country by nominating Merrick Garland, President Barack Obama's choice for the Supreme Court who was blocked by Republicans in 2016.

Working closely with a White House team and consulting with lawmakers and outside advisers, Trump has spent the week deliberating on the choice. He conducted interviews on Monday and Tuesday. He has not yet publicly indicated that he has narrowed the list and could still consider others in the mix.

Vice President Mike Pence also met with some of Trump's contenders in recent days, according to a person familiar with the search process. The person did not specify which candidates Pence met with and spoke on condition of anonymity Wednesday to describe the private search process.

Trump is choosing his nominee from a list of 25 candidates vetted by conservative groups. Earlier in the week, he spoke with seven of them.

The president also spoke by phone with Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah on Monday. The White House did not characterize that call as an interview, and Lee, the only lawmaker on Trump's list, is not viewed as a top prospect.

But Lee has consistent support among conservative and libertarian activists, including some Republicans who worry about a nominee not upholding their principles and who say the Utah senator could bring more certainty.

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, advocated Thursday for Lee in a Fox News op-ed, warning Trump not to repeat "mistakes" of past Republican presidents by picking a Supreme Court nominee who turns out to be insufficiently conservative.

Cruz said President George H.W. Bush's selection of liberal David Souter was "one of the most consequential errors of his presidency." He also pointed to former justices William Brennan, John Paul Stevens and Harry Blackmun, the latter of whom wrote the Roe v. Wade decision that established a woman's right to abortion. All three were nominated by Republican presidents.

Lee, he said, would be a "sure thing."

Paul, the Kentucky senator, has told colleagues he may not vote for Kavanaugh if the judge is nominated, citing Kavanaugh's role during President George W. Bush's administration on cases involving executive privilege and the disclosure of documents to Congress, said a person familiar with Paul's conversations who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Some conservatives have pointed to Kethledge as a potential justice in the mold of Neil Gorsuch, Trump's first Supreme Court nominee last year. Both Kethledge and Gorsuch once served Kennedy as law clerks, as did Kavanaugh. Kethledge, a Michigan Law graduate, would add academic diversity to a court steeped in the Ivy League.

Since Trump said his short list includes at least two women, speculation has focused on Barrett, a former law clerk to Justice Antonin Scalia and a longtime Notre Dame Law School professor who serves on the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Conservative groups rallied around Barrett after her confirmation hearing last year featured questioning from Democrats over how her Roman Catholic faith would affect her decisions.

Trump's choice to replace Kennedy — a swing vote on the nine-member court — has the potential to remake the court for a generation as part of precedent-shattering decisions. Recognizing the stakes, many Democrats have lined up in opposition to any Trump pick.

One group aligned with Democrats began running ads Thursday in the home states of Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, urging them to hold firm in their support of access to abortion services.

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Trump Narrows Supreme Court Pick To 3 Federal Judges

By Mark Moore

[New York Post](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump has narrowed his pick for a Supreme Court nominee to replace retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy to three federal judges, according to a report Thursday.

The top contenders include Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh and Raymond Kethledge, all federal appeals court judges, the Associated Press reported.

The president conducted interviews with prospective candidates Monday and Tuesday, meeting with seven contenders before whittling the list down to three, the report said.

Trump also talked via telephone with Sen. Mike Lee, a Republican from Utah and the only lawmaker on the list, on Monday.

The president has been consulting with the White House team working on filling the vacancy, as well as lawmakers and outside consultants.

The report cautioned that Trump hasn't publicly announced that he has narrowed the list and could still consider others names before he makes the big reveal Monday evening.

Vice President Mike Pence also met with some of the candidates in recent days, but a person familiar with the search process wouldn't reveal the names of those contenders.

Trump is working to find a nominee from a list of 25 candidates examined and cleared by a number of conservative groups, including the Federalist Society.

Other serious contenders include federal appeals Judges Amul Thapar, Thomas Hardiman and Joan Larsen, the AP said.

Trump's announcement to replace Kennedy — a swing vote on the court who sided with liberal justices on gay marriage, health care and abortion — is expected to set off a bruising battle over confirmation in the Senate.

Democrats have called for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to wait until after November's midterm elections, but the Kentucky Republican said he wants a vote in the fall.

A simple majority is required for confirmation in the Senate, which Republicans control by a 51-49 majority, leaving Democrats with few options.

Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) has said she won't support a candidate who is "hostile" to Roe v. Wade, the 1973 ruling that legalized abortion nationwide.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) has told colleagues he may not support Kavanaugh if he becomes the candidate because of Kavanaugh's work in the George W. Bush administration and his decisions about executive privilege and disclosing documents to Congress, the AP reported.

Many conservative groups have compared Kethledge to Justice Neil Gorsuch, Trump's first nominee to the high court last year.

But Barrett is extremely attractive to Trump's base because of her strong religious beliefs.

Conservative groups rallied around her after she was questioned pointedly about her Catholic faith by Democrats during her confirmation hearing for the court of appeals last year.

Brett Kavanaugh, Supreme Court Front-Runner, Once Argued Broad Grounds For Impeachment

By Mark Landler And Matt Apuzzo

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh, the front-runner to replace Justice Anthony M. Kennedy on the Supreme Court, once argued that President Bill Clinton could be impeached for lying to his staff and misleading the public, a broad definition of obstruction of justice that would be damaging if applied to President Trump in the Russia investigation.

Judge Kavanaugh's arguments — expressed in the report of the independent counsel, Kenneth W. Starr, which he co-wrote nearly 20 years ago — have been cited in recent days by Republicans with reservations about him and have raised concerns among some people close to Mr. Trump. But Judge Kavanaugh has reconsidered some of his views since then, and there is no evidence that they have derailed his candidacy.

A federal appeals judge and onetime law clerk for Justice Kennedy, Judge Kavanaugh, 53, is one of only two or three candidates Mr. Trump is still considering for the opening on the court, people familiar with his thinking said. The others are Judge Raymond M. Kethledge of the Sixth Circuit and Judge Amy Coney Barrett of the Seventh Circuit. Mr. Trump said on Thursday that he would announce his choice at 9 p.m. Monday, a day before leaving for Europe.

"I have it down to four people, and I think of the four people, I have it down to three or two," he told reporters on Air Force One as he flew to a rally in Montana. "I think they're all outstanding."

But Judge Kavanaugh's role in the investigation of Mr. Clinton's affair with a White House intern, which resulted in his impeachment in 1998, has raised a red flag among some

people close to Mr. Trump. At a minimum, his views about when to impeach a president are sure to come up during a Senate confirmation hearing and would allow Democrats to shine a spotlight on Mr. Trump's handling of the Russia investigation.

Judge Kavanaugh, who after working for Mr. Starr served as an aide to President George W. Bush, has since expressed misgivings about the toll investigations take on presidents. In 2009, he wrote that Mr. Clinton should have been spared the investigation, at least while he was in office. Indicting a sitting president, he said, "would ill serve the public interest, especially in times of financial or national-security crisis."

White House officials said Mr. Trump was aware of Judge Kavanaugh's views, but they played down the effect on his candidacy. While some people close to Mr. Trump said Democrats could try to exploit his Clinton-era statements, they did not believe this issue would torpedo his chances of getting the nomination.

Mr. Trump's advisers urged him to make a final decision on his choice for the court before he left Washington on Thursday morning for Montana, so they could begin preparing a rollout of the nomination, complete with a prime-time address. But several said they had resigned themselves to the likelihood that Mr. Trump would change his mind several times before Sunday.

"We fully expect the Senate will find the president's choice to have the qualifications, intellect and temperament to serve in the Supreme Court," said a deputy press secretary, Raj Shah.

As a Yale Law graduate in his early 30s, Judge Kavanaugh was one of the primary authors of Mr. Starr's report to Congress, which said Mr. Clinton had lied under oath and concealed evidence of his relationship with an intern, Monica Lewinsky.

The report laid out 11 possible grounds for impeachment, two of which are drawing scrutiny in the context of the investigation by the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, who is looking into whether Trump associates aided Russia's interference in the 2016 election — in an investigation that has been expanded to include whether the president tried to obstruct the inquiry itself.

First, the Starr report said that Mr. Clinton lied to his aides about his relationship with Ms. Lewinsky, "knowing that they would relay those falsehoods to the grand jury." Second, it said he lied to the American public, and that senior officials, including the press secretary, then relied on those denials in their own misleading public statements.

"The president's emphatic denial to the American people was false," the prosecutors wrote. "And his statement was not an impromptu comment in the heat of a news conference. To the contrary, it was an intentional and

calculated falsehood to deceive the Congress and the American people."

By that standard, Mr. Trump's misleading statements to the news media, his miasma of tweets and his protracted public debate over whether to speak with Mr. Mueller could all be used against him, even if the special counsel declines to accuse the president of obstruction of justice.

The Starr report faulted Mr. Clinton for refusing six invitations to testify before a grand jury, saying the refusals substantially delayed the investigation. Mr. Trump has been debating for months whether to accept Mr. Mueller's invitation to give an interview, and his lawyers have argued against it. Under the standard set by the Starr report, Congress should consider that as potential grounds for impeachment.

Mr. Trump also personally dictated a misleading statement to The New York Times about a secret meeting that his son arranged with a Russian lawyer at Trump Tower during the 2016 presidential campaign. Mr. Trump's lawyers and the White House press secretary, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, then repeatedly and falsely denied that Mr. Trump dictated the statement.

The Starr report faulted Mr. Clinton for turning his press secretary and other White House officials into "unwitting agents of the president's deception." It named four aides — John Podesta, Erskine Bowles, Sidney Blumenthal and Harold Ickes — whom it said were lied to by Mr. Clinton about Ms. Lewinsky and who repeated those falsehoods to a grand jury.

The House ultimately did not adopt these two grounds when it voted to impeach Mr. Clinton. But Judge Kavanaugh's involvement in drafting them creates the possibility that Democrats would try to make his confirmation hearing a referendum on the standards of impeachment. And it would force the White House to talk about the Russia investigation during what would otherwise be a welcome reprieve.

Colleagues of Judge Kavanaugh said they did not recall whether he pushed for these two passages to be included — or if he resisted them. They noted that there was lively debate on Mr. Starr's team about what to include in the report, but that in the end, it was the independent counsel's call.

"I don't think it's a fair conclusion to draw that everyone's name who appeared on the report agreed with everything written there," said Andrew D. Leipold, one of Judge Kavanaugh's co-writers, who is now a law professor at the University of Illinois College of Law.

"Our job was to emphasize the grounds for impeachment," he added. "We're not the decision maker; Congress is the decision maker."

Another of Judge Kavanaugh's co-writers, Julie Myers Wood, said the decision on how to define obstruction of justice was made by more senior members of the team.

"It was not my recollection that any of us were the thought drivers on obstruction," said Ms. Wood, who now

runs an investigative firm. "The seasoned and experienced prosecutors were the ones driving what was reasonable in terms of obstruction."

Some legal experts said the broad language in the Starr report merely reflected a recognition that impeachment is a political, not a legal, judgment. "Lying to the American people might be impeachable, but it might not be a crime on the statute books," said Akhil Reed Amar, a professor of law and political science at Yale University.

Mr. Amar, who supports Judge Kavanaugh, said the judge's misgivings about the Starr investigation were welcome evidence of maturity. "I'd rather have someone who has experience and has made mistakes than someone with no track record of difficult decision making," he said.

In rethinking his views, Judge Kavanaugh wrote in 2009 in the Minnesota Law Review that Congress should pass laws that would protect a president from civil and criminal law suits until they are out of office. In any event, he said, there was always a way to remove a "bad-behaving or lawbreaking President."

"If the president does something dastardly," he wrote, "the impeachment process is available."

Trump Focusing On Three Appellate Judges For Supreme Court Nomination

By Dave Boyer

[Washington Times](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump is focusing on three prospective Supreme Court nominees, sources said Thursday, with conservatives divided on the candidates who have emerged.

Sources familiar with the selection process say Mr. Trump, after speaking with six judges, is looking in particular at federal appeals court judges Brett Kavanaugh, Amy Coney Barrett and Raymond Kethledge.

With Mr. Trump's announcement coming Monday, some conservatives are taking aim at Judge Kavanaugh, of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, for rulings on abortion and Obamacare.

"Absolutely, there is cause for concern" about Judge Kavanaugh, a prominent conservative activist said on condition of anonymity.

But Judge Kavanaugh also has his defenders, among them Matt Schlapp, president of the American Conservative Union and CPAC.

"I want to hit the critics head-on," Mr. Schlapp wrote Thursday in an op-ed for The Hill. "A few conservatives have raised concerns that Judge Kavanaugh will be 'another John Roberts,' who sounds great but lets down conservatives in the end.....the Kavanaugh-Roberts comparison is completely misplaced."

He said Judge Kavanaugh has a 12-year record on the appeals court, much longer than Chief Justice Roberts, and his rulings show "dozens of textualist and originalist opinions."

"Kavanaugh is not another Roberts; he's another Scalia, Alito, or Gorsuch," he wrote, referring to conservative justices.

Judge Kethledge, a former law clerk to the retiring Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, serves on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Judge Barrett serves on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals and is a former professor at Notre Dame Law School.

Trump Focused On Kavanaugh, Kethledge For Supreme Court: Source

By Jeff Mason

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Trump Says He's Narrowed Supreme Court Search To Four People

By Jennifer Jacobs

[Bloomberg News](#), July 5, 2018

President Donald Trump said he's narrowed his choice to replace retiring Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy to four people – or perhaps even just three or two – and that he expects to make a decision by Sunday.

"I think I have it down to four people and I think of the four people, I have it down to three or two," he told reporters aboard Air Force One on Thursday. "I think they're all outstanding."

He wouldn't name any of his finalists.

"I'll have a decision made in my mind by Sunday. We'll announce it on Monday."

Three federal appeals court judges have emerged as his favorites: Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh and Raymond Kethledge, two people familiar with the matter said.

Among the three, Trump currently favors Kavanaugh and Kethledge over Barrett, according to the people. The president would neither confirm or deny that the three judges are among his finalists.

"I don't want to say the four," he said. "But I have it down to four."

Trump has interviewed at least seven potential replacements for Kennedy, people with knowledge of the process said earlier this week. The White House aims to have Kennedy's successor confirmed in time for the court's next session in October.

The confirmation process promises to be a fight. As soon as Kennedy announced his retirement plans in late

June, Democrats mobilized against Trump's eventual pick, arguing that anyone he selects would help roll back abortion rights, Affordable Care Act protections, same-sex marriage, and scores of other decisions that have shaped modern America, while ruling in favor of corporations and against under-represented minorities.

With Republicans holding just a 51-49 advantage in the Senate, the fate of the nominee will turn on a handful of Senate outliers in both parties – Republicans who support abortion rights and Democrats who don't.

Barrett, 46, is currently on the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals after being nominated by Trump in mid-2017 and confirmed in October. Before joining the bench, she was a professor at Notre Dame Law School, her alma mater, and two decades ago clerked for the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. Like four of the five Christians on the court, Barrett is a Roman Catholic. If confirmed, she would be the fifth woman to join the court and would join three others currently active.

In response to a question about Barrett last week aboard Air Force One, Trump called her "an outstanding woman."

Kavanaugh, 53, is a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit who has a background in politics. Before he was nominated to the D.C. circuit by George W. Bush, he was Bush's White House staff secretary and worked for Bush during the 2000 Florida vote recount. He also played a lead role in drafting Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's 1998 report on President Bill Clinton. He is a Yale Law School graduate.

Kethledge, 51, was confirmed to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in 2008 after spending most of his career in private practice. A graduate of University of Michigan Law School, he clerked for Kennedy in the late 1990s and advised Republican Senator Spencer Abraham of Michigan.

Kethledge has impressed those within the White House, the people close to the process said. He was considered for the previous Supreme Court vacancy, but didn't meet with Trump then. On Monday, Trump expressed favorable opinions about him.

— With assistance by Steven T. Dennis, and Laura Litvan

Amy Coney Barrett, Possible Supreme Court Nominee, Has Backed 'flexible' Approach To Court Precedent

By Beth Reinhard

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

Amy Coney Barrett, a leading contender to fill the upcoming vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court, has argued that justices should not be bound by court precedent in

deciding whether to overturn landmark decisions that they deem out of step with the Constitution.

Barrett, a longtime Notre Dame law professor appointed by President Trump last year to the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, in legal articles has backed a "soft" and "flexible" interpretation of the legal principle honoring Supreme Court precedents, *stare decisis*.

"I tend to agree with those who say that a justice's duty is to the Constitution and that it is thus more legitimate for her to enforce her best understanding of the Constitution rather than a precedent she thinks is clearly in conflict with it," she wrote in 2013 in the *Texas Law Review*.

Barrett, who is among several judges Trump interviewed this week in his search to replace retiring Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, is facing intense scrutiny by liberal and conservative activists anxious to decipher her potential approach to challenges to the rights established under the landmark *Roe v. Wade* ruling. While judicial nominees typically avoid commenting on specific court rulings, Barrett's philosophy on *stare decisis* — along with her religious views and her earlier writings on the topic — are being scoured for clues to how she might regard the 45-year-old decision that legalized most abortions.

From 2010 to 2016, Barrett, 46, belonged to the Notre Dame Chapter of the University Faculty for Life, which promotes antiabortion resources, according to a judicial questionnaire. In remarks on campus on the 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* in 2013, Barrett described "her conviction that life begins at conception," according to a university magazine. The magazine characterized her view of the court decision as "creating through judicial fiat a framework of abortion on demand."

Barrett has described herself as a "faithful Catholic." She belongs to a close-knit, ecumenical group called People of Praise that, like other Christian groups, believes in the sanctity of life and opposes abortion, members say. The group was formed in 1971. Barrett served on the board of trustees of one of the group's schools from 2010 to 2017, according to her judicial questionnaire.

During her confirmation hearing for the appeals court, Barrett sidestepped some direct questions about *Roe*. "As for your question about *Roe*, I think that the line that other nominees before the committee have drawn in refraining from comment about their agreement or disagreement or the merits or demerits of any Supreme Court precedent is a prudent one," she said.

Barrett said that as a member of the federal appeals court she would "follow all Supreme Court precedent without fail" and would regard decisions such as *Roe v. Wade* as binding precedent.

"I would never impose my own personal convictions upon the law," she added.

In her Notre Dame talk in 2013, Barrett said it was “very unlikely” the high court would overturn the right to abortion, according to the university magazine.

Law professors who have written about stare decisis and reviewed Barrett’s articles said they would expect her to become part of a solid conservative majority on the high court, poised to topple *Roe v. Wade* if the opportunity should arise. Timothy R. Johnson, a professor of political science and law at the University of Minnesota, said Barrett’s legal scholarship “suggests she is more open-minded than other potential nominees” to overturning precedent.

“Her writings lead you to turn your head a little,” he said. “It’s certainly troubling to the left because it does indicate a willingness to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.”

Trump vowed during the 2016 campaign to appoint antiabortion justices to the high court and has predicted that *Roe v. Wade* would fall, though he recently said he had been advised not to ask potential nominees about the ruling.

Everyone on Trump’s short-list would overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

The stare decisis doctrine helps ensure that courts are evenhanded, predictable and consistent, but legal scholars acknowledge that respect for precedent must not be absolute. One example frequently cited to support this notion is *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1954 landmark desegregation decision that upended the “separate but equal” ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson* decades earlier.

In the *University of Colorado Law Review* in 2003, Barrett wrote that the court should reconsider precedent if “a litigant demonstrates that precedent demonstrably conflicts with the statutory or constitutional provision it purports to interpret.” She called for a “flexible” doctrine that allows for “error-correction.”

That article and others by Barrett drew pointed questions from Senate Democrats during her 2017 confirmation hearing. Barrett was pressed on an article she co-wrote in 1998, in the *Marquette Law Review*, that said judges should not be compelled to rule in ways that contradict their religious views and that Catholic judges might therefore recuse themselves from some death penalty cases.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) said Barrett’s religious beliefs and her writings on court precedent made her a reliable vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

“The dogma lives loudly within you,” Feinstein said.

That remark provoked strong criticism from Republicans, as well as from the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, who denounced “anti-Catholic bigotry,” and Princeton University President Christopher L. Eisgruber, who wrote that questions about Barrett’s faith “were not consistent with the principle set forth in the Constitution’s ‘no religious test’ clause.”

In her confirmation hearing, Barrett insisted that the law, not her religious beliefs, would guide her on the bench. She

said her views have evolved since she co-authored the death penalty article as a law school student two decades ago, and she noted her participation in capital cases as a clerk to Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

“A judge may never subvert the law or twist it in any way to match the judge’s convictions,” she said.

Barrett called herself a “faithful Catholic” at the hearing but did not talk about her involvement in People of Praise. The group, which has roots in the Pentecostal movement, includes 1,800 adults across the country, according to a brochure.

In an interview, Joe Zakas, a People of Praise member and longtime Indiana state senator, said group leaders never sought to influence his decision-making in public office. He said he has seen Barrett and her family at the group’s Sunday meetings.

“People admire her,” Zakas said. “As a community member and a lawyer, I am excited about her potential nomination.”

Potential Trump Supreme Court Pick Barrett: Catholic Chicago Judge Stirs Abortion Debate

By Dan Hinkel, David Jackson And Christy Gutowski
[Chicago Tribune](#), July 5, 2018

On President Trump’s short list of potential Supreme Court nominees, the candidate sparking the fiercest debate is a self-possessed Chicago U.S. Court of Appeals judge who’s been on the bench less than a year.

That lack of judicial experience means former University of Notre Dame law professor Amy Coney Barrett has a slim record of rulings for a potential Supreme Court nominee. That void of information about her judicial identity is being filled with the anxieties and hopes of commentators across the political spectrum.

Barrett’s opponents have interpreted her scholarly articles and Catholic faith as suggesting she is a religious extremist who could be willing to overturn precedent and end legal abortion. Critics have focused in part on her affiliation with People of Praise, a charismatic faith group that has been portrayed as oppressive and misogynist — a charge the group rejects.

Supporters and former colleagues, however, describe an exacting legal thinker committed to separating her faith from her interpretation of the Constitution and law.

On Thursday, national news organizations reported that Trump was focused on Barrett and fellow federal appeals judges Brett Kavanaugh and Raymond Kethledge to fill retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy’s spot. Trump told reporters he was down to four candidates. A formal announcement is planned for Monday, but word of the president’s pick could emerge sooner.

Trump promised during the campaign to upend *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Many conservatives have pointed out it would be smart politics to install a woman on the court, rather than have five male justices overturn the key precedent.

For her part, Barrett's public statements have not clearly indicated that she thinks *Roe* can or should be overturned.

"I think it is very unlikely at this point that the court is going to overturn *Roe*, or *Roe* as curbed by [*Planned Parenthood v.*] *Casey*," she was quoted as saying at a 2013 Notre Dame luncheon on the ruling's 40th anniversary. "The fundamental element, that the woman has a right to choose abortion, will probably stand," she added. "The controversy right now is about funding. It's a question of whether abortions will be publicly or privately funded."

Former Notre Dame professor among Trump's finalists for Supreme Court, source says »

Schumer urges Trump to tap Merrick Garland for Supreme Court »

Barrett enjoys the widespread and often passionate support of colleagues stretching back to her days as a clerk for the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia 20 years ago.

Fellow clerks nicknamed Barrett "The Conenator" — a play on her maiden name and reputation for destroying flimsy legal arguments.

"She was very, very smart. Not at all ideological," said Jay Wexler, a Boston University law professor and self-described liberal atheist who clerked for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg alongside Barrett. "I take her at her word that she will try as hard as anyone can to bracket the views she has as she decides cases."

Those who favor abortion rights are not comforted by assurances that Barrett can keep a firewall between her faith and her legal decisions. Daniel Goldberg, legal director of the progressive Alliance for Justice, noted Trump's pledge to appoint "pro-life justices" who would overturn *Roe* and leave the issue for individual states to decide.

"I hope the American people realize the stakes," Goldberg said. "The burden is on her to convince millions of women that their rights will be protected if she's confirmed by the Senate."

Barrett did not respond to a request for comment Thursday.

At 46, Barrett is the youngest of the three leading contenders for the nomination. If selected and confirmed, she would become one of several high court justices with little or no prior experience as a judge, including William Rehnquist, Lewis Powell and Byron White.

Barrett became a minor star among conservatives last fall after her Catholic faith took center stage during her confirmation hearing to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Democrats on the Senate panel, including Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, grilled Barrett about whether her religious beliefs would influence her legal thinking and lead her to overturn rulings such as *Roe*.

"The dogma lives loudly within you," Feinstein told Barrett, "and that's of concern when you come to big issues that large numbers of people have fought for, for years in this country."

Barrett's supporters were incensed, and the comment became the subject of T-shirts and coffee mugs bearing her face. Conservatives accused the senator and other Democrats of using anti-Catholic rhetoric. The presidents of Notre Dame and Princeton University wrote letters in support of Barrett noting that the Constitution bans religious tests for public office.

Along with Feinstein, Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin was called out, and the Catholic lawmaker responded to the criticism in a Chicago Tribune letter to the editor.

"My questions were confined to issues she raised personally in her writings and speeches which could directly impact the discharge of her duties," Durbin wrote. "It was the nominee who raised the issue."

During her confirmation hearing, Barrett repeatedly said her faith would not intrude on her legal reasoning.

"I see no conflict between having a sincerely held faith and duties as a judge," she testified. "I would never impose my own personal convictions upon the law."

Barrett declined to discuss her personal views on abortion, same-sex marriage and other hot-button topics, but she was questioned on her scholarly writings. Those include a 2013 law review article in which she wrote that the *stare decisis* doctrine — which holds that past rulings govern future decisions — is "not a hard-and-fast rule in the court's constitutional cases ..."

"I tend to agree with those who say that a justice's duty is to the Constitution and that it is thus more legitimate for her to enforce her best understanding of the Constitution rather than a precedent she thinks clearly in conflict with it," she wrote.

The Senate panel also zeroed in on a 1998 paper in which Barrett, then a Notre Dame law student, explored when Catholic judges in death penalty cases might have to recuse themselves if they felt their moral beliefs kept them from doing their duty.

Barrett emphasized she was not the lead author — that was one of her professors, John Garvey, now president of the Catholic University of America. Barrett also said that with 20 years of legal experience, she likely would have written the article differently, though she stood by its core principle — that a judge cannot twist the law to match a personal belief.

The full Senate confirmed Barrett in October, with three Democrats voting in support.

During the confirmation battle, 49 Notre Dame Law School colleagues signed a letter praising Barrett as fair-minded and intellectually rigorous. The letter described her as a “role model” and noted the wide ideological range of the colleagues who favored her ascent to the bench.

One of them, Professor Paolo Carozza, told the Tribune this week that Barrett was “an inspiration” to students, particularly women. Carozza, who worked with Barrett for 15 years, described her as intelligent with a measured temperament.

Carozza said he would expect a person’s background and beliefs to inform his or her legal thinking. But Barrett does not present herself as an ideologue, he said, and her thinking on legal issues is complicated.

“I can’t think of a single instance in a faculty debate or conversation or classroom context or lecture where I’ve gotten the sense that Amy is reacting to something on a fundamentally ideological level,” said Carozza, whose scholarly work has centered on human rights. “I just think that’s not her.”

Still, groups that favor abortion rights have cast her potential nomination as a danger to the Roe precedent. On Monday, NARAL Pro-Choice America described Barrett as a zealot who is “perfectly clear” in her desire to overturn the decision.

The same day, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York tweeted criticism of some of her writings.

“If chosen as the nominee, she will be the deciding vote to overturn Roe v. Wade and to strike down pre-existing conditions protections in the (Affordable Care Act),” Schumer tweeted.

Carol Sanger, an abortion rights supporter and professor at Columbia Law School in New York, said the court’s respect for precedent could preserve Roe, even if there’s a solid conservative majority. She noted that access to legal abortions depends on more than Roe, which bars states from criminalizing the procedure.

States have passed myriad laws that regulate abortions, ranging from waiting periods and mandatory ultrasounds to the temporarily halted Texas law that requires that aborted fetuses be cremated or buried. Sanger noted that changes to the makeup of the court could impact what’s allowed and what’s not.

Whatever happens to Roe, she said, abortions will keep happening. The question is whether they will be legal, Sanger said.

Opponents also have brought up Barrett’s ties to People of Praise, a group that calls on its mostly-Catholic congregants to join Protestants in worship and works of service outside the church. According to online archives, Barrett and husband Jesse M. Barrett, a federal prosecutor in northern Indiana, have long been involved with the group of about 1,700 that formed in South Bend in 1971.

Criticism of the group as oppressive and misogynistic was promulgated by disaffected former member Adrian J. Reimers, a former Notre Dame adjunct assistant professor of philosophy. In a 1997 manuscript, Reimers argued that submission to leaders is expected of members, and he likened such groups to “cults.”

Former Obama White House Special Counsel Norman Eisen called the group a “secretive religious cult ... (featuring, yes, ‘handmaidens’).”

Group members called that characterization grossly unfair.

“We’re nothing like that. We are big on personal freedom. Obey your conscience. The only person you can control is yourself,” said Craig Lent, a Notre Dame electrical engineering and physics professor and the group’s overall coordinator.

The group assigns mentors to new members, and in the 1970s adopted the term “handmaids” for female mentors, drawing from Biblical language. Last year, the group scrapped that term and began using “woman leader,” Lent said. Lent noted that the charismatic renewal movement was recognized by Pope Francis in a 2015 address.

The commitment members make to each other “is a covenant, which means ‘I’m with you’ — not an oath, not a vow. We eschew those terms,” said Lent, who added there is no negative consequence for those who leave the group to pursue other paths.

With about 20 branches stretching from Canada to the Caribbean, the group includes political liberals, Lent said.

“We don’t have public policy positions,” said Lent, who declined to discuss Barrett. “Individual members take whatever view they want.”

Inside Amy Coney Barrett’s ‘Cult’

If she is the nominee, get ready for a vicious anti-Catholic Senate smear campaign.

By Adam O’Neal

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

The Trump Administration Is Trying To Tear Down The Wall Between Church And State

By Susan Jacoby

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

Many Americans were shocked when Attorney General Jeff Sessions turned to the Bible — specifically, Paul’s epistle to the Romans — to justify President Trump’s policy of separating migrant children from their parents. This scriptural justification for a political decision should not have surprised anyone, because Mr. Trump’s administration has consistently treated the separation of church and state as a form of heresy rather than a cherished American value.

Attacks on the wall of separation established by the founders — which the religious right likes to call “a lie of the left” — are nothing new. What has changed under Mr. Trump is the disproportionate political debt he owes to extreme religious conservatives, whose views on church-state issues — ranging from the importance of secular public education to women’s and gay rights — are far removed from the American mainstream.

The very meaning of the phrases “religious liberty” and “religious freedom”— traditionally understood as referring to the right of Americans to practice whatever faith they wish or no faith at all — is being altered to mean that government should foster a closer relationship with those who want to mix their Christian faith with taxpayer dollars. This usage can be found in numerous executive orders and speeches by Mr. Trump and his cabinet members. Changes in language have consequences, as the religious right’s successful substitution of “pro-life” for “anti-abortion” has long demonstrated.

Religion-related issues, especially if buried in lengthy government documents, can often seem obscure, but they dominated the news at the end of June, when the Supreme Court upheld Mr. Trump’s travel ban targeting majority-Muslim countries and struck down a California requirement that anti-abortion, state-licensed pregnancy clinics provide notice to their clients that abortion is an option. These significant rulings were immediately overshadowed by the retirement from the court of the frequent swing voter Anthony M. Kennedy, which now gives Mr. Trump the opportunity to nominate a predictable religious conservative who would most likely support the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

While it is impossible to overstate the long-term importance of the next court appointment, Mr. Sessions and many of his fellow cabinet members offer textbook examples of the everyday perils of entangling religion with politics. Mr. Sessions’s citation of the opening verse of Romans 13, which admonishes that every soul must be “subject unto the higher powers” and that there is “no power but of God,” inflamed an already bitter debate over immigration. The White House press secretary, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, followed up with a reminder that it was “very biblical” to enforce the law. Neither went on to quote Verse 10, which proclaims, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Many pro-immigration religious leaders, including Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims, took umbrage at the biblical justification for a policy that could hardly be described as loving. Their objections, however, were based mainly on the idea that Mr. Sessions had picked the wrong verse.

It was left to secular organizations to identify all religious rationalizations as the fundamental problem. The Center for Inquiry, a secular think tank, and the Freedom From Religion Foundation, on whose honorary boards I

serve, issued strong condemnations — as did the Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Rachel Laser, president of Americans United, put it succinctly: “The separation of church and state means that we don’t base public policy on the Bible or any religious book.”

And yet Trump administration officials have used fundamentalist biblical interpretations to support everything from environmental deregulation to tax cuts.

Scott Pruitt, who resigned from his post as the head of the Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday, once asserted in an interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network that Americans who want stricter environmental standards are contradicting the Bible. Mr. Pruitt, a former trustee of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said, “The biblical worldview with respect to these issues is that we have a responsibility to manage and cultivate, harvest the natural resources that we’ve been blessed with to truly bless our fellow mankind.” The trenchant headline recounting the interview in Baptist News read: “God Wants Humans to Use Natural Gas and Oil, Not ‘Keep It in the Ground,’ says E.P.A. Chief.”

Many evangelical Christians do not share such theocratic fantasies. These evangelicals, like former President Jimmy Carter, are spiritual descendants of Roger Williams, who was banished from the Puritan theocracy of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and founded the first Baptist congregation in colonial America. Williams is also credited as the first person to use the phrase “wall of separation,” in a 1644 response to the theocratic Puritan clergyman John Cotton. (There should be a “wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world,” he wrote.) Thomas Jefferson used the expression in a famous 1802 letter to a Baptist congregation in Danbury, Conn.

Williams is an inconvenient figure for today’s religious right, which asserts that the only purpose of the “wall of separation” was to protect religion from government — not government from religion. That was true in early colonial America, but the other side of the equation was well understood by the time the Constitution — which never mentions God and explicitly bars all religious tests for public office — was written. Destructive religious wars in 17th-century Europe, among other factors, had led many Americans to the realization that governments could indeed be threatened by a close identification with religion.

President Trump’s appointees seem unconcerned about whether statements praising the godliness of mixing religion and politics will offend secular and many religious Americans.

Ben Carson, the secretary of housing and urban development and a devout Seventh-day Adventist, has described commitment to the separation of church and state as “crap,” prompted by “political correctness.”

At a December cabinet meeting, Dr. Carson, a retired neurosurgeon, was asked by Mr. Trump to say a prayer thanking God for the recently passed tax cut bill. Mr. Trump also took a jab at the press pool and said, "You need the prayer more than I do, I think." Speaking to Dr. Carson, he added: "Maybe a good prayer and they'll be honest, Ben." Dr. Carson responded by thanking the Almighty for a "courageous" president.

Mr. Sessions took on a larger mission last fall when he sent a 25-page memo on "protections for religious liberty" to every federal agency. It warned that government "may not exclude religious organizations as such from secular aid programs, at least when the aid is not being used for explicitly religious activities such as worship or proselytization."

Andrew Seidel, a lawyer with the Freedom From Religion Foundation, notes that although it's hard to know what this will mean in practice, "It's an invitation — but one that carries great authority — to go further and further and further in shrinking the distance between church and state."

Last but not least is Education Secretary Betsy DeVos. Ms. DeVos, raised as a strict Calvinist, has devoted much of her life to promoting private and religious schools over public education. She is particularly proud that last year's tax bill expanded the education savings accounts known as 529s so that they can now be used to pay for private schools, starting from kindergarten.

In May, Ms. DeVos visited New York City, which has the largest public school system in the country. She did not inspect a single public school. Instead, she stopped by two Orthodox Jewish schools and spoke at a fund-raiser where she was introduced by Cardinal Timothy Michael Dolan. In her speech, she expressed support for tax credits to help pay tuition for private schools.

While applauding state initiatives to aid these schools, Ms. DeVos opposes any federal program that would create a new bureaucracy. That is not enough for Cardinal Dolan, who wants federal money (presumably because he knows that New York is unlikely to divert more taxpayer dollars to private schools).

"Some states will need more prayers and more action than others to bring about needed changes," Ms. DeVos acknowledged.

As someone who believes that the separation of church and state provides equally needed protection for government from religion and for religion from government, I am grateful that laws speak louder than prayers — and take longer to craft on this earthly plane.

Kethledge Gets 11th Hour Push As Potential Consensus Pick For Supreme Court

Boosters for the Michigan-based judge are portraying him as eminently confirmable.

By Christopher Cadelago, Eliana Johnson And Josh Gerstein

[Politico](#), July 5, 2018

As Donald Trump moves to finalize his Supreme Court pick, Judge Raymond Kethledge is getting a behind-the-scenes push portraying him as the consensus choice of conservatives.

Former aides and supporters of Kethledge, a Michigan resident who moves outside Washington circles and is considered the least known of the leading contenders, are quietly circulating positive information about the judge's personal life, political profile and reassuring record on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit. The tacit message: If Brett Kavanaugh is a well-connected D.C. insider, and Amy Barrett is a grass-roots favorite but lacks experience, Kethledge is a down-to-earth Michigander who checks all the boxes for conservatives.

"Unlike many people, he's not a D.C. insider," said Kethledge pal Christopher Yoo, a University of Pennsylvania Law School professor. Kethledge and Yoo shared an office when they clerked for retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy from 1997 to 1998. "He doesn't belong to the kind of circles of power that other former clerks are often drawn to. What's quite telling is his love of Michigan, his love of outdoors. ... One of the highest compliments he can give about a person is they aren't afraid to drink beer straight out of the bottle."

Confidants also are sharing tidbits from what they describe as his encouraging early interactions with Trump, who is prioritizing personal chemistry and political magnetism along with a potential nominee's legal record.

"They just really hit it off," said one Republican close to the White House.

The White House declined comment.

While Kavanaugh's boosters began a public campaign on his behalf almost immediately after Kennedy announced his retirement last week and op-eds advocating his selection have appeared everywhere from The Wall Street Journal to The Hill, Kethledge's supporters have been more low key, quietly nudging and supplying journalists and conservative bloggers with positive information but rarely — until recently — doing the cheerleading themselves.

Kethledge lacks Kavanaugh's vast D.C. network and does not excite grass-roots conservatives in the same way as Barrett — a Roman Catholic, Notre Dame law professor and mother of seven who is electrifying the anti-abortion ranks. His supporters also worry that he lacks a strong advocate inside the White House: White House counsel Don McGahn is firmly supportive of Kavanaugh, while Barrett has become a hero to Trump's evangelical base. And they've shared concerns about Kethledge's lack of an Ivy League law degree, a preference of the president's.

But Barrett's time on the bench has been short, those close to the process note, while Kavanaugh's ties to the

George W. Bush administration along with a 2011 ruling that critics argue paved the way for the Supreme Court to legalize Obamacare have become central to the opposition research file made to scuttle his standing.

Kavanaugh's work for former independent counsel Ken Starr, which vaulted him onto the national stage, has also become a vetting problem for him inside the White House, according to two sources familiar with the situation. White House advisers are concerned that, as a lead author of the Starr Report, Kavanaugh would provide an opening for Democrats to try to back him into a corner with arguments he wielded against former President Bill Clinton that could at some point apply to Trump.

Part of the Starr Report accused Clinton of obstructing justice for allegedly suggesting to his secretary, Betty Currie, that he and Monica Lewinsky "were never really alone" and that Currie was present at all their meetings. Another section of Starr's compendium listed one of Clinton's public statements denying a sexual relationship with Lewinsky as part of a violation of his constitutional duty to faithfully execute the laws.

Some legal observers say Trump's interactions with former FBI director James Comey and Trump's involvement in a statement obscuring the initial purpose of a Trump Tower meeting with Russians during the campaign could be seen as similar to conduct the Starr report cast as grounds for impeachment.

While the parallels are open to debate, they seem close enough to give Democrats fodder to divert at least a portion of a potential Kavanaugh confirmation hearing to a discussion of Trump's alleged misdeeds. There could be documents for Democrats to dig into as well. A National Archives listing of Starr's files shows at least eight boxes of records belonging to Kavanaugh, as well as a smattering of his memos in the files of other lawyers on the team.

One Trump adviser downplayed the concerns. "There's no overlap between the relevant counts of Clinton's impeachment and what is currently being alleged against President Trump," said the adviser, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "It's certainly not an issue in the vetting process."

Yet the Kethledge campaign has picked up steam in recent days. As the president homed in on the three favorites, a former Kethledge clerk from the firm of which the judge was a founding partner authored a piece for National Review suggesting he takes the same approach as the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and Trump's replacement for him, Neil Gorsuch — praise as high as conservatives can give to a possible nominee.

Roger Meyers, in the piece focused on Kethledge's immigration record, described him as a committed originalist and textualist, meaning he applies the law as it's written and shows no favoritism to either side in any case.

"Judge Kethledge has also criticized judicial activism, which is when judges insert their own policy views into their decisions rather than applying our laws and Constitution as they were written and understood at the time they were enacted," Meyers added.

As Kethledge's stock rises, top Democrats are turning their attention to him.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, in a series of tweets Thursday afternoon, previewed the liberal critique of his record by accusing the judge of opposing women's reproductive freedom. "Anti-choice activists have praised his work as Judiciary Committee counsel for Senator Spencer Abraham (R-MI) when Sen. Abraham was pushing for a federal abortion ban," Schumer wrote.

He charged that Kethledge repeatedly sided against workers in cases dealing with the right to organize, fair wages, age discrimination and sexual harassment, and noted he wrote a concurring opinion in a decision that would have prevented as many as 200,000 otherwise eligible Ohio voters from casting ballots.

"Thankfully, #SCOTUS promptly vacated the decision & allowed the votes to be counted," Schumer added, ending his tweet with the hashtag #WhatsatStake

Republicans close to the selection process stressed that Trump could still go in another direction, skipping over Kethledge, Kavanaugh and Barrett and choosing someone else from his largely pre-vetted list of 25 potential court nominees.

But Kethledge backers believe his biggest selling point over the short term may come from what is expected to be a bruising confirmation fight. Hugh Hewitt, one of the Michigan judge's biggest supporters, said Kethledge brings political upside to the process that the other high court contenders cannot. Writing in *The Washington Post*, Hewitt contended that red-state senators up for reelection would have a difficult time not confirming him, mentioning Kethledge's love of hunting and flyfishing.

"Imagine Sen. Jon Tester or Sen. Heidi Heitkamp explaining to their voters this fall why they voted against an honest-to-God outdoorsman," Hewitt wrote.

He also pointed to his character and the book he co-authored on leadership.

Others suggest the Summit, N.J.-born Kethledge, who moved to Michigan before his junior year of high school and still lives in Ann Arbor with his family, has a story that will appeal to a president who revels in reciting relatable biographies.

Kethledge met his wife, Jessica, when they were only 13 years old. The couple have two children — Ray, 20, a rising junior in college, and Ella, 17, a rising senior in high school — and will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary this year, a friend said.

Yoo, who has visited with the family in Michigan several times, focused on Kethledge returning home to Michigan after he worked for Sen. Spencer Abraham (R-Mich.) from 1995 to 1997, and clerked for Kennedy from 1997 to 1998, rather than join a lucrative law firm in D.C.

The judge instead co-founded the law firm of Bush, Seyferth & Kethledge, which continues as Bush, Seyferth & Paige.

Kethledge, who could not be reached for comment, once gave a speech at his alma mater, the University of Michigan Law School, which includes a somewhat unflattering comparison of himself to Bill Murray's character in "Caddyshack."

"What's quite different about him is he is a citizen of middle America," Yoo said, adding that Kethledge does some of his best writing from a small cabin in northern Michigan. "He has a real down-to-earth quality about him."

Gamblers Try To Cash In On Trump's Supreme Court Drama

Brett Kavanaugh has been the favorite so far, with bettors believing he has a 41 percent chance Trump will pick him as his nominee.

By Matthew Nussbaum

[Politico](#), July 5, 2018

Lost money betting on the World Cup? Still seething about that bracket-busting UVA loss?

Anthony Kennedy's Supreme Court vacancy is giving gamblers the next nail-biting chance to cash in — that is, if they can predict who President Donald Trump will pick.

Since the moment Kennedy announced his retirement last Wednesday, wagers have been laid and the betting markets have been trying to zero in on the likely nominee as the planned Monday announcement nears.

"Obviously when this took place last week we had a huge jump in interest on the site," said Will Jennings, head of public engagement at PredictIt, a site that allows trading on political predictions. "This is likely to be a more erratic market."

PredictIt labels itself "the stock market for politics," where political junkies can put money behind their predictions.

As of Thursday morning, Brett Kavanaugh, a judge on the D.C. Circuit Court, led the pack with a 41 percent chance of being the pick. He has long been a favorite in conservative legal circles.

For PredictIt users, though, he also provides a chance to make some money. Investors are capped at investing \$850 per contract. If Kavanaugh were selected, an \$850 investment at 41 cents a share would yield a return of \$2,073, or a net profit of about \$1,100 after PredictIt claimed its 10 percent share.

Sixth Circuit Court Judge Raymond Kethledge is second on the site with shares at 36 cents, followed by Amy Coney Barrett at 25 cents, Amul Thapar at 4 cents, Thomas Hardiman at 3 cents and Joan Larsen at 2 cents.

At least two foreign websites, BetDSI and Sportsbet.com, are traditional gambling websites that have set odds for the Supreme Court pick.

"Judge Brett Kavanaugh is still leading the betting but his chances are less likely now, drifting from \$2.50 out to \$2.63 and he holds only 8 percent of the book," sportsbet.com.au's said in a statement on Tuesday. "It's been one week since betting began and we've really seen a shake-up to the market. The money has been coming in strongly supporting Judge Barrett and you know that old saying, money talks."

Kavanaugh, Barrett, Thapar and Hardiman were the leading contenders on Sportsbet.

Unlike sports betting, which is heavily regulated, there is no readily available data on how many people place bets on different political events, according to David Schwartz, the director of the Center for Gaming Research at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. And even though the internet has made it more widely available, betting on political outcomes is not a new phenomenon.

"It definitely goes back a really long way, at least to the 18th century or so," Schwartz said.

One academic study found that the political gamblers were quite savvy, with the underdog winning just once in the 15 presidential elections between 1884 and 1940 (when Woodrow Wilson defeated Charles Evan Hughes in 1916) — a feat "all the more remarkable given the absence of scientific polls before the mid-1930s," the paper's authors noted.

And if, come Monday, bettors learn that they have picked the wrong horse, fear not.

PredictIt has plans to launch "several more markets" on how different key senators will vote on the eventual nominee, according to Jennings.

"We will turn these around within a few hours of Trump's decision as we expect trader interest over this debate to continue to grow," he said.

NARAL Makes First SCOTUS Ad Buy

Intelligence and analysis on lobbying

By Marianne Levine And Theodor Meyer

[Politico](#), July 5, 2018

Spending on the forthcoming Supreme Court nominee is well underway. NARAL Pro-Choice America launched a five-figure ad buy Wednesday calling on Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) to only vote for a Supreme Court nominee who will uphold *Roe v. Wade*. The ads ran in print in the Portland Press Herald, Kennebec Journal/Morning Sentinel, Bangor Daily News and Lewiston Sun Journal, as well as on the publications' homepages. In a written statement, NARAL

President Ilyse Hogue said President Donald Trump “has a litmus test for his Supreme Court nominee: end Roe v. Wade....For the sake of women in Maine and across the country, we hope Senator Collins does too.”

— NARAL is far from the only group spending money on the Supreme Court nomination. POLITICO’s Elana Schor reported earlier this week that liberal groups are preparing a grassroots campaign to take on Trump’s nominee. “Demand Justice is aiming to spend \$5 million on its own TV, digital, radio and mobilization efforts against Trump’s Supreme Court pick, focusing on [Sens. Lisa Murkowski’s (R-Alaska) and Collins’] home states as well as Indiana, North Dakota and West Virginia, states where moderate Democratic senators voted last year to confirm Trump-tapped Justice Neil Gorsuch.” Full story.

BALLARD TO LOBBY ON BEHALF OF 9/11 VICTIMS: Ballard Partners’ Brian Ballard and Syl Lukis registered recently to lobby for the law firms Kreindler & Kreindler and Anderson Kill P.C., both of which represent the families of 9/11 victims. Family members of 9/11 victims have sued the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for damages from the terrorist attack. Such lawsuits were allowed under the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, which Congress passed in 2016, overriding a veto from President Barack Obama. (The fight over JASTA itself generated a significant amount of lobbying.) A judge recently denied Saudi Arabia’s motion to dismiss the case and the plaintiffs are now in limited discovery.

— In an interview with PI, Jim Kreindler, who represents the victims’ families, said his firm hired Ballard to help convince the Trump administration to declassify FBI documents related to the 9/11 attacks. Kreindler said that “only the president can declassify the thousands of documents that will reveal both Saudi Arabia’s role and our government’s cover-up.” He said the documents will “help the families in their suit against Saudi Arabia.”

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Who are you rooting for in the World Cup? Let us know: mlevine@politico.com and tmeyer@politico.com. You can also follow us on Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer) and [@marianne_levine](https://twitter.com/marianne_levine).

BGR GROUP SIGNS ANHEUSER-BUSCH: Anheuser-Busch has added BGR Group to its long roster of lobbyists. According to a recent disclosure filing, BGR Group will “provide strategic guidance and counsel on issues impacting the Company.” Dave Boyer, Bob Wood, Brent Del Monte, John Stone and Robb Walton will work on the account. In addition to BGR Group, Anheuser-Busch also has Pine Street Strategies, Akin Gump, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner, DMM Strategies, Peck Madigan Jones, The Hobbs Group, the OB-C Group, the Simmons & Russell Group, Federal Policy Group, Public Strategies Washington and Forbes-Tate on retainer. The

company spent \$1.3 million on lobbying in the first quarter of 2018.

NORTHROP GRUMMAN ENGINEER PARTICIPATED IN CHARLOTTESVILLE VIOLENCE: ProPublica and Frontline have identified a man in a red “Make America Great Again” hat who participated in the violence in Charlottesville, Va., last summer and at one point “pushed an African-American protester to the ground and began pounding on him,” according to video footage. He’s Michael Miselis, a systems engineer at Northrop Grumman. The company didn’t respond to requests for comment from ProPublica or PI. Northrop Grumman is one of the top lobbying spenders in Washington, shelling out \$4.4 million on lobbying in the first quarter, with nine firms on retainer.

INSIDE QATAR’S LOBBYING BLITZ: Reuters’ Lawrence Delevingne, Nathan Layne and Karen Freifeld report that Qatar has spent at least \$24 million on Washington lobbying since the start of 2017, as the country tried to burnish its image amid a diplomatic standoff with Saudi Arabia and its other Persian Gulf neighbors. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have spent at least \$25 million over the same period. “‘When the blockade happened they (Qatar) had no presence on the Hill,’ said Joey Allaham, a former adviser to Qatar who was paid \$1.45 million, including costs, for his advocacy work. A year later the boycott remains in force, as the rivals have failed to resolve their dispute. But Qatar has managed to persuade certain lawmakers and influential Americans that it is a U.S. ally in the fight against terrorism and victim of an unfair boycott, interviews with advisers on both sides show.” Full story.

WILBUR ROSS’ STOCK HOLDINGS WENT UP IN VALUE DURING DIVESTMENT DELAY: “Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross appears to have earned seven figures from his failure to divest stock holdings until months after he was required to do so, a Center for Public Integrity analysis found,” Center for Public Integrity’s Carrie Levine reports. “Ross was supposed to sell his Invesco Ltd. stock, valued at between \$10 and \$50 million, within 90 days of his Senate confirmation, according to his ethics agreement. He was confirmed on Feb. 27, 2017, which meant he was required to divest before the end of May 2017.

— “But in filings publicly released last month, Ross acknowledged he failed to sell his stock in Invesco until December 2017. By that time, his stock’s value had increased by between approximately \$1.2 million to \$6 million over its value at the end of May, depending on Ross’ actual number of shares, a figure that hasn’t previously been reported. Invesco is an Atlanta-based independent investment management firm with worldwide offices from Beijing to Brussels. Ross had sold his firm, WL Ross and Company, to Invesco in 2006, and stepped down from his positions with the company and its affiliates when he took the commerce secretary job.” Full story.

Trump Narrows List For Supreme Court Pick, With Focus On Kavanaugh And Kethledge

By Robert Costa And Seung Min Kim

[Washington Post](#), July 5, 2018

President Trump's deliberations over a Supreme Court nominee now center on three candidates culled from his shortlist: federal judges Brett M. Kavanaugh, Raymond Kethledge and Amy Coney Barrett, according to White House officials and Trump advisers involved in the discussions.

But Trump's final decision on a replacement for Justice Anthony M. Kennedy remained fluid as he traveled Thursday to a political rally in Montana before heading to his golf course in New Jersey for the weekend, with the president pinballing between associates as he sought feedback and suggestions.

While Trump has placed Kavanaugh, a polished former Kennedy clerk and Yale Law School graduate, near the top of his list, he has also been asking several friends and aides about whether Kavanaugh's past work in President George W. Bush's White House would be an issue for his core supporters, thousands of whom filled the Four Seasons Arena in Great Falls, Mont., on Thursday evening.

And Trump is hearing out arguments for Kethledge, another former Kennedy clerk, and for Coney Barrett, a University of Notre Dame Law School professor who is being championed by some social conservatives, according to the advisers, who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

[Coney Barrett has backed 'flexible' approach to court precedent]

Kavanaugh and Kethledge have the "inside track," according to a person close to the president, because some White House officials believe Coney Barrett, 46, could instead be a pick for the high court in the coming years, after she gains more experience on the federal bench.

A second person close to the president said Thursday that Kavanaugh and Kethledge are the shortlist.

Vice President Pence met privately with Kavanaugh on Wednesday at the vice president's residence and that session went well, underscoring the judge's strong prospects, according to two Republicans briefed on the meeting.

"I think I have it down to four people, and I think of the four people, I have it down to three or two. I think they're all outstanding," Trump told reporters Thursday en route to Montana, declining to name the finalists. "I don't want to say the four. But I have it down to four. I'll have a decision made in my mind by Sunday. We'll announce it on Monday."

Others who emerged on Trump's shortlist just days ago — federal judges Thomas M. Hardiman, Amul R. Thapar and Joan L. Larsen, as well as Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) — remain in contention, but the president's queries have mostly been about the leading contenders, whether it's been during phone calls, in Oval Office meetings or on Air Force One.

One Trump adviser said the president is unlikely to expand his list in the coming days but could follow up by phone with some of the candidates, all of whom have been asked to fill out disclosure forms dealing with their finances and conduct.

Trump told reporters he did not expect to bring candidates in for interviews again when he headed to his New Jersey golf club this weekend. "I doubt it," he said.

Trump's process has echoes of his search for a Supreme Court justice last year — he eventually nominated Neil M. Gorsuch — and his consideration of a running mate during the 2016 presidential campaign. Even as White House counsel Donald McGahn fiercely guarded information about the candidate interviews and Trump's leanings, the president was engaging with the freewheeling loop of boosters, lawmakers and confidants that he has long counted on for political gut checks.

"Do you know him?" Trump has asked about Kethledge, advisers said. Or, on Kavanaugh's link to the Bush network, with which Trump has clashed for years, the president has flatly asked, "What do you think?"

Others close to Trump said a variety of factors was on the president's radar beyond the candidates' interpretation of the law, such as their educational profiles, personal backgrounds and rapport with him in interviews — leaving most Trump allies wary of making predictions.

"He listens to everybody, big or small, influential or not, and absorbs it all," said Trump friend and Newsmax chief executive Christopher Ruddy. "He then adds that to how he feels and comes to a conclusion."

The resignation Thursday of Scott Pruitt, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, after months of scrutiny over ethics issues added some uncertainty to Trump's timeline for a Supreme Court decision. As White House officials handled Pruitt's exit, some Trump allies wondered whether the president might announce his choice before Monday to bump Pruitt from the headlines.

Trump, however, maintained Thursday that Monday remains his chosen date for an announcement. "We're going to do it at 9 p.m. in the White House," he told reporters.

Debates over Kavanaugh's work with Bush and rulings he has made on health care and abortion continued to churn Thursday as critics urged the president to shy away from a judge with an establishment Republican pedigree.

Kavanaugh, 53, helped investigate President Bill Clinton as part of independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr's team and then served as an aide to Bush before joining the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in 2006.

"He looks, walks and quacks like John G. Roberts Jr.," said former Virginia attorney general Ken Cuccinelli II, referencing the chief justice of the United States, who angered conservatives with his rulings on President Barack

Obama's signature health-care law. "The Bush lives loudly in Kavanaugh."

Cuccinelli's remark was a wry reference to another contender, Coney Barrett, whom social conservatives unsure about Kavanaugh have rallied behind this week.

"The dogma lives loudly within you," Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) told Coney Barrett last year during her confirmation hearing in an exchange about the judge's Catholic faith — a comment that was roundly criticized by religious leaders.

"If Democrats tried to go anti-Catholic with her, that'd backfire and we know it," said Rep. Peter T. King (R-N.Y.).

But Trump is not rushing toward Coney Barrett with the same fervor, according to two people close to the president. They described his view of her as "positive," since he appointed her, but noted that he sees Kavanaugh and Kethledge as similar to Gorsuch, another former Kennedy clerk, whose tenure has been celebrated by his supporters and whose judicial records are largely acceptable to most wings of the Republican Party.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), a Trump ally, signed a statement Thursday with other conservative leaders pushing for Lee, after days of phone calls with Trump and others over his concerns about Kavanaugh. The move complicated the outlook in the Senate, where Republicans have a narrow, 51-seat majority.

Kethledge's sudden ascent in the process is widely seen in the West Wing as a consequence of what conservative talk-radio host Rush Limbaugh has called the "whisper campaign" against Kavanaugh, with the president newly intrigued by the University of Michigan Law School graduate.

Democrats, meanwhile, prepared for the political war over the high court that could dominate the summer, with Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) making his own suggestion for Trump.

Schumer privately urged the president in a phone call earlier this week to nominate federal judge Merrick B. Garland, who was Obama's third nominee to the Supreme Court and was summarily shunned by Senate Republicans in 2016.

Trump called Schumer on Tuesday afternoon for a Supreme Court-centered conversation that lasted less than five minutes, according to a person familiar with the call. Schumer, the person said, pressed the president to name Garland to succeed Kennedy, arguing that doing so would help unite the country.

Schumer also warned the president that nominating a jurist who would be hostile to *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 decision that established a woman's right to an abortion, and to Obama's health-care law would be "cataclysmic" and damage Trump's legacy, added the

person, who was not authorized to speak publicly and requested anonymity.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump pledged to nominate judges who would overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Schumer also tweeted barbs about Kethledge on Thursday. "Judge Kethledge has a history of opposing women's reproductive freedom," he wrote.

The rush of scrutiny gave Kethledge's backers hope that his chances were perhaps rising — and a preview of the political firestorm he would face on Capitol Hill should he be nominated.

Josh Dawsey contributed to this report.

Political Polarization Takes Hold Of The Supreme Court

By Carl Hulse

[New York Times](#), July 5, 2018

As President Trump prepares to name a new justice, one reality is increasingly clear about the Supreme Court — it has become another polarized institution in the polarized capital of a polarized nation.

The string of politically charged 5-to-4 decisions that punctuated the end of the court's term highlighted how thoroughly the tribal politics that have engulfed the White House and Capitol Hill have now ensnared the court. In deciding major cases with clear political overtones, an extremely reliable indicator of what side a justice would come down on was whether he or she was appointed by a president with an "R" or a "D" behind his name.

"It is clearly the most partisan court ever, where you can actually look at Republican and Democrat and use that as a proxy for voting and behavior on the court," said Neal E. Devins, the Sandra Day O'Connor professor of law at the College of William and Mary, who has studied the partisan evolution of the court.

And this is before Mr. Trump's virtually certain nomination of another conservative, a development expected to make the partisan divide even more stark. With one recent poll showing that half of American voters believe the Supreme Court is driven mainly by politics, lawmakers in both parties worry that the perception is destroying trust in the court as a supposed neutral arbiter of the United States' political and policy disputes.

"People expect that the executive and legislative branches are going to be political, but the judiciary is supposed to be above the fray," said Senator Susan Collins, Republican of Maine, whose vote is likely to be pivotal in the coming confirmation fight. "But when you talk about ideological blocs on the court, then you are eroding the public's faith in the judicial system and the rule of law, and I think that is really serious."

Senator Patrick J. Leahy, Democrat of Vermont and a longtime senior member of the Judiciary Committee, said the rising partisanship of the judiciary presents a major obstacle for the Supreme Court if it comes to be viewed mainly as a creature of politics.

"They have a huge image problem," Mr. Leahy said. "I am hoping John Roberts understands that."

John G. Roberts Jr., the chief justice being referred to by Mr. Leahy and a man appointed by President George W. Bush, seems to understand that.

He has given multiple speeches lamenting the jaded view that many Americans have developed toward the court as well as toward the highly political tone of the confirmation process. He has tried to educate the public on the distinction between judges confirmed to determine the constitutionality of policy rather than the wisdom of the underlying policy itself. Demonstrating the difference, he joined justices appointed by Democratic presidents in upholding the Affordable Care Act.

But polishing the reputation of the court for its independence can be very difficult when the most notable decisions are being decided mainly along partisan lines and when political reliability has become a chief attribute presidents look for in making their Supreme Court picks.

The refusal by Republicans in 2016 to even consider President Barack Obama's nomination of Merrick B. Garland heightened the visibility of political infighting around the court. The coming showdown over replacing Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, for years the court's perceived swing vote and bridge between liberals and conservatives, should only add to the perception of the court as a platform for a defining struggle between Republicans and Democrats.

Mr. Trump has not helped efforts by Chief Justice Roberts to tone down the political atmosphere surrounding the court. Back in March, the president tried to whip up voters for 2018 by saying that Congress needed more Republicans and that his party "must ALWAYS hold the Supreme Court," treating it as if it was just another branch of the legislature. His tweet no doubt caused some discomfort for Chief Justice Roberts and others who pride themselves on the tradition of judicial independence, but it also represented exactly how many Americans view the courts.

Mr. Devins, the law professor, said the difference between the current court and those in the past was that there was typically either a conservative appointed by a Democratic president or a liberal named by a Republican. And past presidents sometimes dipped into their own circle of advisers and allies to fill a court seat, heightening the personal relationship over the political in making the choice. Those days seem long gone.

"The parties now seek political advantage by demonstrating on that issue they are not like the other party," he said of the nomination process. "It is in their best interest

to show their constituents they are for a different kind of judge."

Mr. Devins noted that the Supreme Court hasn't fully descended to the level of partisanship of Congress, as shown by the recent ruling siding with a Colorado baker who refused to prepare a wedding cake for a gay couple. Sidestepping the central issue, the seven-justice majority included two members of the court's liberal wing. In many of the court's decisions on more mundane and technical questions, there is often a broader consensus.

But in the highly political cases that closed the session on labor, voting rights and the travel ban, among others, the partisan divide was unmistakable, highlighted by the tough tone of dissenting opinions in which justices appointed by Democrats torched the Republican-appointed majority for what they portrayed as badly misguided and political rulings.

The coming confirmation hearings promise to represent another escalation in the partisanship enveloping the court. The hearings will be to replace Justice Kennedy, the last member of the court to be seated with a unanimous Senate vote. It is unlikely there will be another such vote anytime soon.

Mueller Taps More Prosecutors To Help With Growing Trump Probe

By Chris Strohm

[Bloomberg News](#), July 5, 2018

Special Counsel Robert Mueller is tapping additional Justice Department resources for help with new legal battles as his year-old investigation of Russian interference with the 2016 election continues to expand.

As Mueller pursues his probe, he's making more use of career prosecutors from the offices of U.S. attorneys and from Justice Department headquarters, as well as FBI agents – a sign that he may be laying the groundwork to hand off parts of his investigation eventually, several current and former U.S. officials said.

Mueller and his team of 17 federal prosecutors are coping with a higher-than-expected volume of court challenges that has added complexity in recent months, but there's no political appetite at this time to increase the size of his staff, the officials said.

According to his most recent statement of expenditures, more money is being spent on work done by permanent Department of Justice units than on Mueller's own dedicated operation. The DOJ units spent \$9 million from the investigation's start in May 2017 through March of this year, compared with \$7.7 million spent by Mueller's team.

Trump's Allies

Mueller's probe has come under attack from President Donald Trump and his allies who say it's going on too long, expanding too far and costing too much. But the special

counsel's charter, issued by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, includes investigating whether Trump or associates colluded with Russia and "any matters that arose or may arise directly from the investigation."

Investigators in New York; Alexandria, Virginia; Pittsburgh and elsewhere have been tapped to supplement the work of Mueller's team, the officials said. Mueller has already handed off one major investigation – into Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen – to the Southern District of New York.

"Whatever you got, finish it the hell up because this country is being torn apart," Republican Representative Trey Gowdy of South Carolina told Rosenstein during a June 28 hearing. Rosenstein said Mueller knows he must move expeditiously.

A heavy investigative load for Mueller had been anticipated from the start, the officials said. The special counsel has already issued 20 indictments and secured guilty pleas from five individuals, and some of the defendants are mounting stiffer-than-expected battles in court.

"I don't think he's getting in over his head," said Solomon Wisenberg, who served as deputy independent counsel investigating President Bill Clinton in the 1990s. "These things have a tendency to balloon. Yes, it may be taxing on them. No, it's not that unusual."

Nor is it unusual for Mueller to turn to U.S. attorneys or to Justice Department headquarters, said Wisenberg, who's now a partner at the law firm Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP.

Subpoena Decision

Mueller is dealing with the legal battles as he considers whether to subpoena Trump for an interview and as he accelerates his investigation into potential collusion.

The first – and perhaps biggest – court case for Mueller is over his indictment of Trump's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, for an array of financial crimes. Manafort is fighting the indictment in two federal courthouses, and he expanded his case last week to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

Both sides are now gearing up for a trial to begin later this month.

"It's going to be all hands on deck when they go to the Manafort trial," Wisenberg said.

Other court fights may have come as a surprise.

Russians Fight Back

Mueller indicted 13 Russian individuals and three entities in February on charges of violating criminal laws with the intent to interfere with the U.S. election through the manipulation of social media.

None of the targets are in the U.S., but one of them, the Internet Research Agency, has forced Mueller into another legal fight in federal court. The two sides have been sparring most recently over how to protect sensitive investigative

materials from disclosure. Mueller has enlisted prosecutors with the U.S. Attorney's office in Washington to handle the case.

Another surprise came last week when Andrew Miller, a former aide to Trump adviser Roger Stone, filed a sealed motion to fight one of Mueller's grand jury subpoenas.

Mueller also plans to move eventually to sentencing for Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, and former foreign policy adviser George Papadopoulos, both of whom pleaded guilty to lying to investigators. 'Busy Guy'

"He's a busy guy," said Jeffrey Cramer, a former federal prosecutor.

"There's certainly multiple fronts going on right now," said Cramer, who's now managing director of the international investigation firm Berkeley Research Group LLC. "Some of them are more active than others."

Cramer doesn't think Mueller's in over his head but says he might be taking timing into consideration when it comes to making additional moves.

"You don't have unlimited resources in a sense that you've got an unlimited cadre of prosecutors and agents," Cramer said. "There does come a time where they can only do so much."

Mueller has already shown that in some situations he will hand off cases, such as with the Cohen investigation. Additionally, Mueller is getting help from Rosenstein, who is fielding congressional demands for documents and testimony.

In the end, though, Mueller knew what he was signing up for.

"While there's a lot on the plate, they're not all going on all at once," Cramer said. "His office is doing their job. He's doing what he's supposed to be doing."

White House Orders Crackdown On Doing Union Business On Taxpayers' Dime

By Sean Higgins

[Washington Examiner](#), July 5, 2018

The White House's Office of Personnel Management on Thursday ordered the heads of all federal agencies and departments to immediately crackdown on overuse of "official time," the practice of allowing federal workers to conduct union business while still being paid for their government job. President Trump signed an executive order in May calling for the practice to be curtailed, citing cases where some employees did nothing except official time as proof that it was being abused.

A letter to all heads of departments and executive agencies from OPM Director Jeff Pon said they should cancel existing agreements with unions on official time and start from scratch. "[A]gencies shall take steps to modify (collective bargaining agreements) and other agreements at the soonest

permissible opportunity to ensure that unrestricted grants of taxpayer-funded union time are eliminated,” Pon said.

The OPM letter states that government workers can spend no more than 25 percent of their total paid time on official time and cannot use the time to lobby the government on official time or to “prepare or pursue” worker grievances, all previously common practices. It sets the total annual amount of official time hours allotted for a union at no more than one per member of the union. It also directs federal agencies to strictly monitor and report on the practice and to make those reports public.

Official time was first allowed under the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act and has been traditionally viewed as a trade-off for certain limitations put on federal worker unions, such as prohibitions on striking. Its use is widespread, and it increased during former President Barack Obama’s administration.

A May report by the OPM put the cost at \$175 million in 2016, up from \$162 million in 2014, the last time the practice was surveyed. The total number of official time hours was 3.6 million, up 100,000 hours from 2014.

The directive makes clear that the administration views official time as, at best, a necessary evil and directs heads of agencies to adopt that attitude too. “[A]gencies should take the view in collective bargaining negotiations that taxpayer-funded union time is not ordinarily considered to be reasonable, necessary, in the public interest, or consistent with effective and efficient Government,” it said.

Unions representing federal workers have defended official time, arguing it makes addressing worker-related issues cheaper for taxpayers by having people ready to deal with them. The unions claim the White House is trying to politicize the issue.

A representative for the American Federation of Government Employees could not be reached for comment.

Fed On Lookout For Recession But Still Sees Strong Economy: Minutes

By Jason Lange

[Reuters](#), July 5, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Eat It, Liberals: Trump Economy’s Second Quarter Growth Projected To Hit 4.1 Percent

By Matt Vespa

[Townhall](#), July 5, 2018

If Donald Trump wins the election, the stock market will collapse. He doesn’t have an agenda that can create jobs. You all heard the doomsday talk. In the end, three million jobs have been created since Trump was elected. The Dow Jones

broke 26,000, and had a 5,000-point surge last year—the largest annual gain ever. All told, the stock market has grown around 40 percent since Trump’s upset win over Hillary Clinton.

The tax reform package passed in 2017 has laid down a solid foundation for economic growth. Wages are growing. Consumer and small business confidence has reached its highest levels in 10+ years. Unemployment has reached an 18-year low, black unemployment has reached a historic low. The good economic news is pervasive and starting to make Democrats nervous, who thought the tax cuts would be an albatross around the GOP’s neck—wrong. Now, for the second quarter, the economic growth is project to hit four percent (via Atlanta Fed):

The GDPNow model estimate for real GDP growth (seasonally adjusted annual rate) in the second quarter of 2018 is 4.1 percent on July 2, up from 3.8 percent on June 29. After this morning’s construction spending report from the U.S. Census Bureau, the nowcast of second-quarter real government spending growth increased from 0.8 percent to 1.6 percent, while the nowcast of second-quarter real nonresidential structures investment growth decreased from 7.6 percent to 5.3 percent. The nowcasts of second-quarter real consumer spending growth and second-quarter real nonresidential equipment investment growth increased from 2.7 percent and 4.0 percent, respectively, to 2.9 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively, after this morning’s Manufacturing ISM Report On Business from the Institute for Supply Management. The model’s estimate of the dynamic factor for June—normalized to have mean 0 and standard deviation 1 and used to forecast the yet-to-be released monthly GDP source data—increased from 0.15 to 0.77 after the ISM report this morning.

So much winning.